

**Writing the Resistance: A Palestinian Intellectual History, 1967-1974**

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## **Declaration**

*I, Katlyn Maureen Quenzer, declare that this thesis is my own work. No material within it has been has been used for the award of any university degree or that of any higher learning institution. No material within it has been published previously or written by another person, except where appropriate acknowledgment has been given.*

## Acknowledgments

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## **Abstract**

This thesis explores the ideological work of the intellectuals involved in the Palestinian Resistance, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization more specifically, from 1967 to 1974. In particular, it sets out to answer the following question: What were the changing roles of the intellectuals involved in the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) from 1967 to 1974, particularly in relation to anti-colonial politics, and why did they change? Being a particularly fertile time in Palestinian resistance history, many of those involved in the movement had the opportunity to explore new ideological possibilities for resistance and worked to link their movement ideologically to revolutionary resistance movements taking place globally at that time. The 1967 defeat was particularly poignant for Palestinian and Arab intellectuals, as it demonstrated to them that the work of the Ba'thists and Arab nationalists during the 1950s and 1960s had not created the necessary changes to liberate Palestine and, in their opinions, to liberate the entire society. Such changes, the intellectuals had hoped, would bring forth a larger revolution for the Arab world. With criticisms of local regimes, the intervention of external governments, and Zionism itself, they worked to reshape Palestinian resistance and reimagine Arab liberation. Yet due to fractured relationships and general disunity, it became difficult to create the type of resistance they had imagined. Three factors have seemed constraining: the shortcomings of the intellectuals, external factors, and problems in the ideas they developed for their society.

Along with presenting the research question and hypothesis and defining key terms, the Introduction provides a literature review. The rest of the thesis chapters are arranged

thematically and chronologically. Chapter One provides historical links between this newer generation of intellectuals and the older generation at the end of the Ottoman Empire and the beginning of the Mandate period. In Chapter Two, the initial reactions to the 1967 Defeat and the unique opportunity the PLO and its leaders had following it are analysed. Chapter Three considers the factionalism that took place within the PLO and the various ideological streams that were born of this. Chapter Four explicates the particular reasons why the ideologies they developed were troubled from the start, as well as some of the fundamental ironies within them. In addition to the possibility that their ideas did not suit the needs of the population in part because they did not have mass support, Chapter Five raises the notion that the efforts of the PLO's intellectuals may have been overly quixotic, as some have argued. The Conclusion suggests that, in many ways, the period ends as it begins, with their dreams of revolution as dreams and their criticisms of the society and each other as they were after soon after the Defeat.

### **Transliteration Note**

Within the text body, the transliteration of Arabic words and names can be variable. This thesis does not follow any systematic approach, but uses common spellings that have regularly appeared in English-language media and other publications (for example: Sadik al-Azm, Shafiq al-Hout, and fedayeen). This was done in large part for ease of reading.

Nonetheless, in order to aid the reader in any further research, I have transliterated the titles of the Arabic texts and their publishers within the citations and bibliography. I used the Library of Congress guide for Arabic transliteration. Authors names, however, remain in the simplified form as in the text, to avoid confusion. The transliterated title and publisher along with the commonly-held author's name will be sufficient in locating the texts. Additionally, within the references I have used the Library of Congress guide to transliterate lesser-known authors' names. Finally, publishers who have a standardised transliteration of their publishing house are maintained (for example, Riad El-Rayyes rather than Riāḍ al-Raīs).



## Abbreviations

Arab Nationalist Movement	ANM
Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine	DFLP
Front de Libération National	FLN
Palestine Liberation Front	PLF
Palestinian National Council	PNC
Palestine Research Center	PRC
Palestinian Liberation Organization	PLO
Palestinian National Liberation Movement	Fatah
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine	PFLP
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command	PFLP—GC
United Arab Republic	UAR

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## Introduction

*Of the nations with a long history, the Palestinians are among those with the most to tell: a history of social dislocation, exile and dispossession as well as the restructuring of socioeconomic life and transformation of the political domain in the diaspora and at home.*<sup>1</sup>

### Research Question and Hypothesis

This thesis sets out to answer the following question: What were the changing roles of the intellectuals involved in the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) from 1967 to 1974, particularly in relation to anti-colonial politics, and why did they change? This research has allowed me to place Palestinian, as well as some Arab, intellectuals of the time period within larger discussions on anti-colonial intellectuals and their potential value, as well as their shortcomings, within resistance movements. This is a discussion that is woven into all chapters of this thesis. The 1960s and 1970s were a particularly fertile time for intellectuals of the post-colonial context, and it is within this framework that I position those included in this study—that is, in a setting of guerrilla resistance movements and political activity against colonialism and general Western interference in what was then called the Third World. Aside from the work of heads of state, particularly those of the non-aligned movement, mobilisation was taking place at various levels of society. In the Arab world, intellectuals and *fedayeen* fighters came

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<sup>1</sup> Phillip O. Ammour, "Review Article: Yousef Sayigh: A Personal Account of the Palestinian National Movement," *Journal of Holy Land and Palestine Studies* 17, no. 1 (2018): 141.

together to fight not only imperialism and colonialism, but also the existing structures within their society. Success on these fronts varied, yet the ideas generated are nonetheless important to examine.

I propose three explanatory variables for the changing roles of the intellectuals. These are: the shortcomings of the intellectuals; a lack of fit between the ideas they developed and intransigent political and social realities; and external factors. “Shortcomings” refers to the general mistakes made by the intellectuals in forming and maintaining their movement. These mistakes include lapses in judgement that affect political strategy and execution of ideas, as well as an inability to effectively reach the masses. Devoting adequate time to developing ideologies and exploring how they best suited the intended audience was a necessary step that was often lacking. The second point, the lack of fit between their ideas and the political realities, refers to the conflicts between the types of ideas the intellectuals worked to bring to their audience and the types of ideas their audience would be willing to accept. These conflicts are thrown into relief by the difficulties the intellectuals had in gaining enough popular momentum for their movement. While the intellectuals were working to radically change their reality, their ideas still needed to be agreeable enough with the people for whom the ideas were designed. An example of a type of factor that will be discussed is the secular nature of their ideas versus the possible religious tendencies of the society. External factors refers to political situations and events beyond the control of the intellectuals that affected their ability to progress in their goals and to maintain a strong role within the PLO. An example is the death of Abdel Nasser in 1970 and the rise of a new political era under Anwar Sadat, which helped to usher forth new approaches to the Arab–Israeli conflict. These three points represent some of

the fundamental problems with which the Resistance grappled, causing much of the fracturing that took place within the PLO. These factors will be explored within the conclusion of each chapter.

### **Disambiguation of Terms**

In this thesis, I have used the term “the Resistance” more loosely than I have used the term PLO. This is done in order to refer to the general group of individuals and factions working towards Palestinian liberation, particularly after the 1967 war. This term includes those dedicated to one PLO faction, such as Abu Iyad, as well as those whose work and political leanings were more fluid, such as Kamal Nasser. Additionally, I will make connections between Frantz Fanon’s colonised intellectual and Antonio Gramsci’s organic intellectual, in order to provide a frame of reference as to the types of qualities present in the intellectuals under discussion. The term “anti-colonial,” however, is used as a more general term to describe the nature of the intellectuals’ work and aspirations. Furthermore, this term aptly describes the times in which the intellectuals worked and the types of movements that they worked to connect with, both ideologically and literally. Lastly, the intellectuals in this study largely fall into the broad political category of “leftist” due to their identification with political ideologies such as Marxism and socialism, for example, as well as their general desire to forge an anti-colonial struggle, much in the fashion of other guerrilla resistance groups at the time. Leftists intellectuals share a secular orientation and a suspicion of nationalism, but of course, as we will

see within the discussions of fragmentation within this thesis, there are great variations between them.

## **Significance of the Research**

In his classic, *A Peoples' History of the United States of America*, Howard Zinn writes:

I don't want to invent victories for people's movements. But to think that history-writing must aim simply to recapitulate the failures that dominate the past is to make historians collaborators in an endless cycle of defeat. If history is to be creative, to anticipate a possible future without denying the past, it should, I believe, emphasize new possibilities by disclosing those hidden episodes of the past, when, even if in brief flashes, people showed their ability to resist, to join together, occasionally to win.<sup>2</sup>

What is remarkable about this flash in Palestinian resistance history is not only the outpouring of intellectual activity, but also, that despite the perceived failure of their efforts at resistance and change, the period left an indelible, prescient mark on Palestinian resistance, one that no matter how dulled it became with the passage of time, remains relevant and, arguably, necessary to analyse afresh. In a study of black radical movements in the United States, Robin D.G. Kelley notes, "unfortunately, too often our standards for evaluating social movements pivot around whether or not they 'succeeded' in realizing their visions rather than on the merits

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<sup>2</sup> Howard Zinn, *A People's History of the United States: 1492–Present*, Third Edition (London; New York: Routledge, 2015), 10.

or power of the visions themselves.”<sup>3</sup> The 1960s and 1970s offered different ideas for the future of Palestine and the Arab world. In working to reimagine society altogether, many of the intellectuals of the time explored new, and oftentimes leftist, realities for their region. It could be said that discussions of the fate of Palestine today, and particularly the question of a “one-state” or “two-state” solution brings us full circle to the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>4</sup>

### Context of the Thesis

At the state-level, the Non-aligned Movement and Third Worldism were providing a potentially powerful force against the Soviet Union and the West (led by the United States). “Nehru, Sukarno, and others...developed an alternative ‘national’ theory. For them, the nation had to be constructed out of two elements: the history of their struggles against colonialism, and their program for the creation of justice.”<sup>5</sup> These movements, and Nasser’s leadership in particular, inspired many of the resistance groups early-on in their efforts to create a liberation movement. Nonetheless, the perceived deficiencies in Nasser’s policies and in the Arab world more generally, made clear particularly after the 1967 war, necessitated a reconfiguration of

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<sup>3</sup> Robin D. G. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002), ix.

<sup>4</sup> It is important, nonetheless, to distinguish between the one-state solution and the type of revolution that they had hoped to inspire. In the one-state solution as it is spoken of in diplomatic circles, Jews and Palestinian Christians and Muslims live side-by-side, all ruled by a secular state. The goals of some groups of the Palestinian Resistance during the 1960s and 1970s, however, and at least for many of the factions, sought to establish a different type of state altogether. Some examples of the differences in these two ideas can be found here: Saree Makdisi, “One State: The Realistic Solution,” in *Palestine and the Palestinians in the 21st Century*, ed. Rochelle Davis and Mimi Kirk (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 255–56.

<sup>5</sup> Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People’s History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007), 12.



resistance, as well as the goals of the Palestinian struggle. The period itself was, as Fouad Ajami describes it, “a unique episode in Arab thought.”<sup>6</sup> He sets the scene: “yesterday’s radicals—the Ba’th Party and President Nasser...were now on trial. A younger generation was to see, in the full light of the defeat, the shortcomings of that brand of radical nationalism that had held sway from the early 1950s up to 1967.”<sup>7</sup> Palestinian and Arab intellectuals began to criticise and, at the least, become suspicious of the promises of Arab nationalism, which had in many ways been part of the Third Worldism project led by Nasser, Sukarno, and Nehru, amongst others. Beneath the positive rhetoric produced by it were some grim realities that created difficulties for success against Israel. Vijay Prashad points out some of the misrepresentations existing in the rhetoric of Third Worldism in general: “To read the texts produced by the political project of the Third World can be gravely misleading. Most of the documents and speeches are triumphal, and few of them reveal the fissures and contradictions with the Third World.”<sup>8</sup> The intellectuals of the Palestinian Resistance, however, offered something a bit different. Their position, not as statesmen but as educated people who wanted to participate in the fight for Palestinian liberation, gave them freedom in what they wrote yet also limited their power in some obvious ways. Their desire to create a popular struggle, whether or not it was successful, also defined their movement and made it significant. While historians have researched and discussed the PLO, its factions and history, few have explored the intellectuals and thinkers involved in the

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<sup>6</sup> Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 16. Despite the well-founded criticisms of Fouad Ajami and his later work and views in particular, his views of the 1967–1974 period and the intellectuals who worked during it are nonetheless important to raise. They provide a counter-narrative to the intellectuals’ understanding of their vision and intentions and allow for greater depth of critique.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 13.

factions of the 1960s and 1970s as anti-colonial actors who were part of a larger movement of the time. In this study, I explore their roles in light of this movement. Ran Greenstein contributed to this work in his *Zionism and its Discontents: A Century of Radical Dissent in Israel/Palestine*, in which he studies different approaches to anti-Zionist activism by Palestinians as well as Israelis. While he asserts in the chapter, “Palestinian Nationalism and the Anti-Colonial Struggle,” that the factions of the PLO during the 1960s were working towards an anti-colonial struggle, he notes that as much as they wanted to model their struggle on ones taking place alongside theirs, their situation remained unique. “It was not only militants and leaders in exile,” he explains, “but the bulk of their popular constituency as well.” Furthermore, he notes theirs is, “possibly the only case in modern history of a people fighting to liberate its country from colonial conquest, forced to operate from outside its boundaries.” Due to this, he notes that models provided by people such as Mao and Fanon were not entirely transferable, leaving them without a clear solution.<sup>9</sup> This dilemma will be discussed in regards to the extent to which it affected the intellectuals’ ability to have an impact, as well as the extent to which it demonstrates the contradictions and holes within their strategies. Particular focus will be given to this in Chapter Five, in large part in the form of criticism. As Greenstein points out, while Fanon’s work—which I will discuss below—is not directly transferrable, it is not entirely dissociated from their cause. This is because he predicts many of the obstacles they eventually face, as well as many of their shortcomings, both of which will also be discussed in Chapter Five.

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<sup>9</sup> Ran Greenstein, *Zionism and its Discontents: A Century of Radical Discontent in Israel/Palestine* (London: Pluto Press, 2014), 137.

Mona Younis conducted a comparative study of the South African and Palestinian examples.<sup>10</sup> She focuses on the relative successes that the two movements had in the 1980s, when compared to earlier times, and also seeks to explain why the anti-apartheid movement was overall more successful. Unique to her study is an in-depth analysis of the significance of national liberation movements in relation to class-based efforts, helping us to make sense of how class relates to the conception of resistance that the intellectuals had. This becomes particularly relevant when working to evaluate the problems the intellectuals encountered when they tried to build a class-based movement. Younis notes that class has often been ignored by social movement theorists and democratisation theorists. Democratisation literature, she says, “fails to show how classes become political actors.” On the other hand, social movement theorists disregard the importance of class once groups and organisations gain a political foothold.<sup>11</sup> Younis notes that each class has a unique set of skills and assets. Similarly, we find that the intellectuals included in this study are given a unique opportunity due to the urgency of the 1967 defeat and the position of many of them as university students, primarily at the American University in Beirut. What is unclear, however, is if their class standing was another reason for their roles to ultimately diminish by 1974. Given that I identify Yassir Arafat as a political leader, more than as an intellectual, which is consistent with the impressions others who knew him presented to me, then the question remains as to whether or not there was a difference between Arafat’s class and that of the intellectuals.

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<sup>10</sup> Mona Younis, *Liberation and Democratization: The South African and Palestinian National Movements* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

Another factor that affected not only the intellectuals but the PLO, was their limited independence and strength due to a lack of financial and economic resources, two elements that are widely accepted as important in advancing any political movement. Younis discusses their importance in conjunction with her critique of Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT). She points out that while RMT traditionally implies that those who lack in resources are less likely to succeed in their social movements, there are example in which groups have been able to succeed despite this challenge.<sup>12</sup> In general, Palestinians had fewer resources available to bring success to their movement. More specifically, it was only after the 1967 defeat that the PLO was able to gain political and financial support for their movement. From this point on, factions competed for political and financial allegiance from other states, and some also fought to be independent from other states (i.e. Jordan). Thus, it was in part the role of the intellectuals to seek to overcome the challenge of resources. This was a particularly challenging problem for a people who had become, essentially, stateless. The year 1974, arguably marks the end of this unique period, as noted by authorities on Palestinian and Arab contemporary history, such as Ajami and Yezid Sayigh. Ajami refers to the 1973 war, when Egypt regained the Sinai Peninsula, as “the sudden remaking of the political order.”<sup>13</sup> Sayigh describes the change with acute detail, describing that along with the friendlier relations between the United States and Egypt came the US agreement with Israel in 1975 to, not “deal with the PLO until it recognized Israel’s right

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 28. Additionally, there are examples of those who are resource-rich, yet are unable to advance their liberation movements. Examples include indigenous rights movements in, for example, the United States and South America.

<sup>13</sup> Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, 157.

to exist and accepted UNSCR 242 and 338.”<sup>14</sup> Indeed, “the battle-lines for the Middle East peace process had been drawn, and would remain largely unchanged for the next decade.”<sup>15</sup> This was, as Sayigh describes, to the detriment of the PLO, which had gained international recognition at the UN in 1974, in part “due to its willingness to modify its objectives and strategy, exemplified by the resolution of the PNC [Palestinian National Council] in 1974 to establish ‘a fighting national authority’ on any Palestinian soil vacated by Israel.”<sup>16</sup> Such steps also alienated leftist groups, who were hoping for larger, systemic change.<sup>17</sup> While the period ended with the leftists marginalised, much can be said about the efforts of left-leaning groups and intellectuals within the PLO, what they wanted, and why they wanted it.

Those included in this research participated, to some degree, in the PLO. While some within the organisation may have identified themselves as religious, those included were not actively working in Islamic groups during their time in the PLO.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, while this was an important time in the history of Islamic political groups in the Middle East, it is beyond the scope of this research to include detailed information regarding their movements and ideas at the time, particularly given my focus on the PLO. Nonetheless, while the Islamic groups existed outside of the PLO, the secularism of the intellectuals is a possible reason for what appears to be their failure. The exclusion of the Islamic groups from the PLO was self-imposed as well as a

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<sup>14</sup> Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949–1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 321.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 321–22.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 322.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 447.

<sup>18</sup> Charles Tripp, “West Asia from the First World War,” in *The New Cambridge History of Islam*, ed. Francis Robinson (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 347. For more information on this subject in general, see: Nels Johnson, *Islam and the Politics of Meaning in Palestinian Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 2013), 65–95.

more natural result of both the Islamic groups' and the PLO's political inclinations. Khaled Hroub explains: "The Islamists excluded themselves from the PLO, even before being excluded by others, showing little interest in joining a coalition of communist and secular nationalist parties."<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Hroub notes that these parties were seen, by Islamic leaders of the time, as comprised of atheists and secularists, "Their [the Islamic groups'] weakness, coupled with their marginalisation and refusal to engage in armed resistance hardly gave the MBP [Muslim Brotherhood of Palestine] a ticket to join the PLO at the time."<sup>20</sup> Ajami also discusses the Islamic perspectives that arose after the 1967 defeat. Thinkers such as Mohammad Jalal Kishk argued that Arab society had lost touch with Islam, and that the shift towards the left, by many intellectuals, was ironic because the anti-imperialist ideas they touted also came from the West.<sup>21</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood's popularity, however, as well as the religious inclinations of society in general, raises questions about the ability of the intellectuals to understand the needs of the masses. This particular point will be explored further in Chapter Five.

The Islamic dimension was clearly present, such as in the previously mentioned work of the Muslim Brotherhood and in the writings of Sayyid Qutb, who, despite his hanging by the Egyptian state in 1966, was an inspiration to many hoping to radically change the Arab world. However, secular movements were writing more openly and prolifically during this time period. In terms of Palestinian history, the entrance of Islamic groups to the centre of resistance took

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<sup>19</sup> Khaled Hroub, "Palestinian Islamism: Conflating National Liberation and Socio-Political Change," *The International Spectator* 43, no. 4 (2008): 63.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, 63.; For more on Islamic perspectives of the defeat more generally, see pages 60–87.

place, arguably, in the 1980s, with groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad coming to the fore.<sup>22</sup> Many, but not all, of the individuals included in this study either led or were heavily involved in the factions comprising the PLO at the time. A number of these factions were left-leaning, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), led by George Habash. Other individuals who were involved in the resistance occupied more “traditional” intellectual positions, such as Sadik al-Azm, an academic who was never fully involved in one faction, but often contributed to *Shu’un Filastiniya* (Palestinian Affairs), the journal of the Palestine Research Center (PRC). His landmark book *Self-Criticism after the Defeat* provided reflections and a harsh, frank look at the state of affairs in the Arab world at the time of the 1967 defeat.<sup>23</sup> Heading the PRC was Anis Sayigh, whose efforts to intellectually stimulate Palestinians in order to increase knowledge of the conflict was made manifest in *Shu’un Filastiniya*. Because many intellectuals wrote in it, it was also read by them, and hence enjoyed a fairly committed audience.<sup>24</sup> Others within this study at times identified with a particular group while at other times remained independent, such as Kamal Nasser, the journalist and poet, who was, for a certain period of time aligned with the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah; a reverse acronym of the faction’s full Arabic name, *Harakat al-Tahrir al-Watani al-Filastini* ). The intellectuals included in this study by no means amount to an exhaustive list. Nonetheless, those included act as a representation of the expanse of ideas present during this time.

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<sup>22</sup> For more general information on this subject, preliminary research could begin here: Tripp, “West Asia from the First World War,” particularly 347–50.

<sup>23</sup> Sadik al-Azm, *Self-Criticism after the Defeat* (London: Saqi Books, 2011). Original Title: *al-Naqd al-dhāti b’ad al-hazīmah* (Damascus: Dār Mamdūh ‘Adwān, 1968).

<sup>24</sup> One can get a sense of this when reading, for example, the beginning of Yezid Sayigh's introduction in: Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, xviii.

It will be evident, furthermore, that primary attention will be given to intellectuals working within the Middle East and writing to an Arabic-speaking audience. Many others who made an indelible mark on Palestinian resistance worked outside of the region and occupied more academic spheres.<sup>25</sup> Those intellectuals and their work are, arguably, already accessible to a larger audience. More importantly, by working in the West and at, for example, Western academic institutions, their function and audience were, at least in part, different. This difference thus puts them somewhat outside the scope of this research. Those living and working within the region tended to be more connected to the PLO and its immediate work. There are, of course, some exceptions to this. Edward Said, as will be seen in this introduction, is not completely absent in this work and maintained connections to the PLO.<sup>26</sup> Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, who wrote for *Shu'un Filastiniya*, is also considered.

In naming these individuals, the lack of women is apparent. This does not mean that women were not there, actively resisting. On the contrary, Leila Khalid became a poster woman for the Resistance during this time period due to her involvement in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine's (PFLP) plane hijackings in 1969 and 1970. PFLP publications included articles that specifically addressed women and the necessity of their involvement in resistance.<sup>27</sup> Nonetheless, what I found when reading newspapers, factions' magazines, and

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<sup>25</sup> Examples include the Khalidi family and Edward Said.

<sup>26</sup> Shafiq al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO: The Inside Story of the Palestinian Struggle*, trans. Laila Uthmān and Hader Al-Hout (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 136–37.

<sup>27</sup> Yezid Sayigh also discusses some minor efforts by the PFLP and PDFLP (The Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine) in creating women's units. Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 233. For a more personal account of women's involvement in militance, see: Rabab Ibrahim Abdulhadi, "Whose 1960s? Gender, Resistance, and Liberation," in *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness*, ed. Karen Dubinsky, Catherine Krull, Susan Lord, Sean Mills and



memoirs, is that women were not writing as frequently as men in these publications. This could be because they simply occupied different spaces for resistance, or it could be that they were not given the space to write—or, plausibly, a combination of these two factors. This in itself is another topic of research.

Lastly, because violence was an essential part of resistance during the time period, it is a point of focus in this thesis as well. Armed resistance and the involvement of the *fedayeen* was an important aspect of resistance ideology at the time. Violence was also present within the ideologies and tactics of guerrilla resistance groups, such as the Front de Libération National (FLN) of Algeria, that were inspirational to the Palestinian Resistance at the time. Fanon, who was a vocal supporter of the Algerian struggle against French colonialism, describes the logic behind the use of violence in a way that mirrors that of the intellectuals in this study. He writes in *The Wretched of the Earth*:

When in 1956, after the capitulation of Monsieur Guy Mollet to the settlers in Algeria, the Front de Libération Nationale, in a famous leaflet, stated that colonialism only loosens its hold when the knife is at its throat, no Algerian really found these terms too violent. The leaflet only expressed what every Algerian felt at heart: colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence.<sup>28</sup>

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Scott Rutherford (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009). She also references the establishment of the General Union of Palestine Women (GUPW) in 1965, 15.

<sup>28</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 61.

This tone and thought process could be found in the factions of the PLO at the time as well, as armed struggle became an essential part of many of the groups' strategies; as a way to defend themselves and to gain a fair seat at the negotiating table. William Quandt reflected on working with those who were or had been involved in guerrilla resistance: "You had to weigh seriously, one way or the other, that this was not unusual when dealing with people who had gone through national liberation movements."<sup>29</sup> As we will see in the coming chapters, the use of armed struggle and the extent to which it should be a focal point became an important point of discussion and debate.

## **Existing Literature**

A number of scholarly works have contributed to my general knowledge of the subject at hand. What follows are descriptions of those works, how they have been significant to this study, as well as what is unique about this work in light of the existing literature. In general, it is the focus on the ideological efforts of the intellectuals in the context of anti-colonialism and the tracking of their changing roles that separates this study from others.

Ajami's musings on the complications that came with revolutionary ideas post-1967, provide a helpful perspective on the types of problems that arose from the intellectuals' work from 1967 to 1974. Ajami describes both the hope and disappointment that came with the new generation of intellectuals in the PLO, after the failures of Arab nationalism and Ba'thism. He mentions two major branches of thought that came about after the 1967 war: one branch

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<sup>29</sup> William B. Quandt, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 25 September, 2017, phone interview.

involved those concerned with Palestinian, rather than Arab, nationalism; while the other branch was concerned with a larger revolutionary movement.<sup>30</sup> For those adhering to this second vision, the Palestinian struggle formed part of a necessary broader, pan-Arab revolution. Ajami refers to many in this younger generation, particularly those of the second category, as “radical intellectuals.”<sup>31</sup> In general, he is critical of the outcomes of this period. To the more radical left, his reaction comes from what he perceives to be a general emptiness in their calls. To him, their ideas were more a reaction to the failures of Arab nationalism than to the successes of resistance movements of the time. He writes:

If pan-Arabism had failed, and if the prior attempt to incorporate the Arab world into the liberal order of the West had come to naught, then why not turn to the methods that worked elsewhere—in Cuba, Algeria, Vietnam, China? The radicals would now seek in the translated writings of Guevara, Debray, Marx, Lenin, and Giap what the liberals had sought earlier in the nationalism, the legality, and the secular politics of the West. The sentiment was the same as was the frustration and impatience that gave rise to it. What differed were the books that people read and the models they admired.<sup>32</sup>

While Ajami acknowledges the merits of the period, he is critical of the means by which the intellectuals worked to create change. Throughout this thesis, I seek to demonstrate the roles that these anti-colonial intellectuals sought to embody, and how those roles demonstrate their

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<sup>30</sup> Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, 47.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 47–48.

ideologies for resistance. Their efforts were likely more than simply a transfer of ideas from one context to another. Nonetheless, Ajami's point, that their efforts were not strong enough to create success in part because of the ideas that they worked to incorporate, is suggestive. In the Conclusion, attention will be given to discussing whether or not the failures of the period can at least in part be blamed for what Ajami locates as the primary shortcomings of the "radical intellectuals."

Sayigh's work *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949–1993*, has provided essential information in regards to the PLO during the 1960s and 1970s (as well as before and after this time). His work also provides details of the evolution of the PLO's factions as well as information regarding the opinions of many featured in this study. This information will be useful to analyse their thoughts and ideas in light of anti-colonial struggle during the time period, understanding its significance both for Palestinian Resistance and for this larger struggle. It is my focus on the intellectuals' efforts in creating an anti-colonial struggle which distinguishes my work from Sayigh's. Along with demonstrating some of the theoretical ties of the intellectuals' work with the notions of the roles of the intellectuals posed by Fanon, for example, I also discuss the possible reasons why the intellectuals failed in their efforts. These reasons stretch beyond strategic miscalculation and into the realm of theoretical and practical reasons why the intellectuals could not maintain a strong role within the Resistance. What further differentiates my work from Sayigh's, is that he uses the intellectuals' writings as evidence of what was taking place. Conversely, I use what took place in order to further substantiate and account for the intellectuals' role, which appears to have become increasingly limited. Additionally, the general focus of this thesis is broader: it

is on intellectuals and their place and role within their society, not just on the political history of a particular movement.

Elizabeth Suzanne Kassab's *Contemporary Arab Thought: Cultural Critique in Comparative Perspective* also provides useful information in regards to the reactions of intellectuals, from across the Arab world, to the 1967 defeat.<sup>33</sup> Her inclusion of works of fiction is illuminating. Kassab tends to focus on the emphasis these individuals placed on evaluating Arab society, with special regard to its cultural development, and the need, in their opinion, to bring about progress in this regard.

Paul Thomas Chamberlin's *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* was helpful particularly in grounding the research, as he discusses the efforts of the PLO to place their organisation within the context of resistance movements taking place globally at the time.<sup>34</sup> Chamberlin focuses on the larger-scale, organisational side of the PLO and its factions as well as its relationship to other global powers, such as the United States. In this study, I am more concerned with the nuances and ideological struggle taking place within factions and amongst the thinkers that helped to lead them, examining how they worked to make themselves part of an anti-colonial movement, at times in spite of the more official line of the PLO. Nonetheless, Chamberlin's text provides the necessary background information for understanding general attempts at building, at least on the surface, an anti-colonial, guerrilla resistance movement. Chamberlin

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<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth Suzanne Kassab, *Contemporary Arab Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

<sup>34</sup> Paul Thomas Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

demonstrates the unique power the PLO came to have as a non-state actor. In this thesis, I seek to provide a more nuanced understanding of the complications and challenges that accompanied that power. The rise of the PLO and its increasing recognition on the global stage, came with an internal ideological struggle and, as some intellectuals perceived it, a sidelining of the larger revolutionary project of which they had dreamed.

Paul Salem's *Bitter Legacy: Ideology and Politics in the Arab World* provides insights into some of the possible reasons that the Palestinian and Arab left, failed to deliver after the 1967 defeat and the general decline of Arab nationalism's popularity.<sup>35</sup> He provides some useful background information in regards to why the left was able to rise, even if briefly. Quoting Maxime Rodinson, some of whose work also looks at the 1960s and 1970s in Palestinian resistance, he raises the point that Marxism "provided 'an attractive ideological synthesis'."<sup>36</sup> It created some momentum—"an up-to-date conception of the world, a universal explanation of the imperialist phenomenon,...a practical method for modernization and development, strategy, and tactics, a theory of ethics giving moral force to urgent secular aims, and even an aesthetic theory in which the artist too had a place in the active ranks."<sup>37</sup> Marxism thus provided grounds for the left's rise, and in some ways, its demise, as it failed both to deliver and to overcome the status quo, which will be discussed in Chapter Five and the Conclusion.

Additionally, by providing a nuanced understanding of the leftist groups, Salem highlights some of the contradictions that possibly existed within the groups and complicated

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<sup>35</sup> Paul Salem, *Bitter Legacy: Ideology and Politics in the Arab World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994).

<sup>36</sup> Maxime Rodinson, cited in, *Ibid.*, 178.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

their path to success. For example, while leftist intellectuals claimed that Nasser represented the petty bourgeoisie, Salem claims that the Communist parties of the Middle East “shared largely the same base as the revolutionary Arab nationalist parties: namely, the petty bourgeoisie, or, more informally, the new middle class.”<sup>38</sup> Salem speaks particularly of Communist parties from a slightly earlier time, but he notes that members of the PLO factions also had this characteristic.<sup>39</sup> Still, he also explains that the left’s “highly intellectualized explanation of the defeat” also appealed to lower-class Palestinian refugees, providing them with, “a central and dignified role in the nationalist program and a means of escape from the miserable conditions in which they lived.”<sup>40</sup> The extent to which the masses were truly brought to the forefront, however, was a subject of debate even amongst the intellectuals themselves during the time, which will be discussed in Chapter Four. While the intellectuals were not necessarily an elite or elitist group, perhaps their inability to truly rally the masses, as expressed in their own literature, is evidence of their social standing and inability to move beyond it. Certain individuals amongst them, such as al-Azm, were from the upper class, yet as was pointed out to me in interviews, the intellectuals generally had a closer connection to the populations, from which they had emerged. The intellectuals, were, in large part, representative of the middle class. However, as Younis reminds us, “middle classes are not homogenous...intellectuals, professionals, and civil servants, among others—respond differently.”<sup>41</sup> The breadth of the class origins of the intellectuals may help to explain how a

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 195.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>41</sup> Younis, *Liberation and Democratization*, 117.

group that was seemingly non-elite (and non-elitist) could ultimately lose their connection to the masses. This will be explored in Chapters Three and Four, as well as in the Conclusion.

Hisham Sharabi's *Arab Intellectuals and the West: The Formative Years, 1875–1914* lays out the ideas and political leanings of Arab intellectuals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>42</sup> Sharabi groups the intellectuals according to their social standing and religious background, which includes Islamic scholars, Christian intelligentsia, as well as secularists, discussing their ideological leanings within the context of the time in which they lived. Sharabi's points are useful in laying out the intellectual heritage of those included in this thesis as well as in tracking the history of ideologies, such as nationalism, that pervaded the region. Taking a term from Karl Mannheim, Sharabi defines those within his study as “‘vocational intellectuals...,’ that is, those whose roles as intellectuals were lifelong careers.”<sup>43</sup> In this thesis, I have taken a broader definition of the term intellectual, understanding it to encompass those whose lives were shaped by their efforts to understand their society and use their knowledge and position to try and create political and social change.

## **Sources and Approach**

The general approach to answering the research question posed by this thesis, is an empirical one. I include a variety of opinions from intellectuals whose views are representative of the leftists of the time period; their opinions present nuanced and particularised variations. Primary

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<sup>42</sup> Hisham Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West: The Formative Years, 1875–1914* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1970).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 4.



source material, largely comprising journal articles and memoirs by the intellectuals, as well as interviews with them, is fundamental to the research. These materials allow investigation into the relationship between the events of the period and their effects on the intellectuals' goals, as well as on their overall role within the PLO at that time. In the identified material, intellectuals express their views on the events of the time, their political leanings, the challenges they faced, and their criticisms of the movement and its mistakes. Overall, these materials offer a way to track the intellectuals' sense of their progress, or lack thereof, as well as their changing roles. Preliminary research was largely archival in nature, helping me to get a sense of the larger conversation taking place during the time period.

In terms of primary sources, three different aspects of the intellectuals' efforts were considered—the message they sent to the masses, the discussions they had amongst themselves, and their more intimate impressions of the period. For an understanding of the political approach and public façade of the factions, I turned to the publications distributed to their membership, such as the PFLP's *al-Hadaf* (The Target); the smaller English and French language pamphlets, intended as outreach to Europe from the PLO's factions; monographs published by the factions to inform the public of their political positions and impressions of the work of the other factions and individuals; and interviews with faction members. Factions' publications provide a means by which to understand the reason behind some of the criticisms the intellectuals faced. While they often made clear statements of progress to the masses, these same points were later criticised by the intellectuals in discussions amongst themselves. The criticisms that are present within them, however, are criticisms of the other factions. These provide a sense of the constant competition taking place between the factions. For example,

there was a great debate, as we will see in Chapter Three, about the extent to which they were successfully convincing the public and speaking in a clear, understandable way. Seeing how they spoke to members through these publications gives colour to these ideas. Additionally, books they wrote that featured research into various topics related to Palestinian Resistance, such as Ghassan Kanafani's study of the Palestinian revolts of 1936–1939 and Yusuf Sayigh's work on Zionist colonialism, were also explored. These were often published by the Palestine Research Center and used as a form of outreach to the population. To understand their discussions with one another, I accessed publications such as *Shu'un Filastiniya* and *al-Mawaqif* (Stances), both of which are the more literary publications that include detailed articles by the intellectuals that document their perception of events of the time, as well as the missteps and positive steps of the Resistance. Lastly, for gaining an understanding of nuance and more personal impressions, I employed memoirs and conducted six interviews. Interviews were conducted in English and Arabic and lasted between one to two hours. They were primarily conducted with individuals who had been active, to some degree, in the PLO between 1967 and 1974, or acutely aware of political activities of the time. This added to the challenge of locating potential interviewees, but the research nonetheless benefits from the quality of the interviews and the depth of what interviewees had to say. Two of the interviews conducted were with individuals who had contact with members of the PLO and significant insights about them—William Quandt and Georges Malbrunot, the latter of whom conducted one of the final interviews with George Habash before his death.

## Defining “Intellectual”

Much work has been done to define and describe the function and responsibilities of intellectuals throughout the ages.<sup>44</sup> Given, however, the historical context of this thesis, there are a few thinkers in particular whose ideas are most relevant and provide necessary perspective on the work of the intellectuals of the PLO. In the western tradition, Edward Shils argued in favour of the necessity of intellectuals in creating change and upholding the integrity of movements. He writes, “by means of preaching, teaching, and writing, intellectuals infuse into sections of the population which are intellectual neither by invocation nor by social rule, a perceptiveness and an imagery which they would otherwise lack.”<sup>45</sup> Although often seen as subsidiary to politicians, heads of state, and those with “hands on” experience, their presence in, and impact on, public life is often either unnoticed or under-credited. Other thinkers argue, however, that moving beyond an intellectual sphere such as academia is, in terms of one’s intellectual status, treasonous. Julien Benda argues just this in *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, stating that intellectuals must maintain a distance from that which they discuss due to the dangers of political passions overtaking reason.<sup>46</sup> Of course, as is clarified by Roger Kimball in the introduction to the English version of Benda’s book, this does not necessarily mean that intellectuals should cut off all political commitments:

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<sup>44</sup>More in the Western context, this includes, for example, Julien Benda and Edward Shils. In the Middle Eastern context, this includes individuals such as Muhammad Abduh and Taha Hussein.

<sup>45</sup> Edward Shils, *Selected Papers of Edward Shils*, Volume I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 5.

<sup>46</sup> Julien Benda, *The Treason of the Intellectuals*, trans. Richard Aldington (New York: Routledge, 2017), 1–26.

Julien Benda was not so naïve as to believe that intellectuals as a class had ever entirely abstained from political involvement, or, indeed, from involvement in the realm of practical affairs. Nor did he believe that intellectuals, as citizens, necessarily should abstain from political commitment to practical affairs. The “treason” or betrayal he sought to publish concerned the way that intellectuals had lately allowed political commitment to insinuate itself into their understanding of the intellectual vocation as such.<sup>47</sup>

This notion, as will become apparent, is the antithesis of that which was understood by many of those working within the PLO during the 1960s and 1970s. While many included in this study belonged to political parties, and even help to lead them, I have taken the view that dedication to a cause does not disqualify one from being considered an intellectual.

From the East, and the Muslim world in particular, we can find examples of the types of individuals who had similar qualities and characteristics in their desire to revolutionise their society and implement change. They sought change through theoretical and ideological material that seemed most relevant to them, often finding influence from leftist doctrines. Although ultimately seeking an Islamic society, Ali Shariati is one who comes to mind, as an example of one who worked to appeal to the intellectual leadership of the Iranian Revolution, although arguably the path they chose was different from what Shariati had wanted.<sup>48</sup> We see a similar pattern taking place within the context of Palestine, in which the intellectuals (although

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<sup>47</sup> Roger Kimball, "The Treason of the Intellectuals and the 'Undoing of Thought'," in *The Treason of the Intellectuals* (New York: Routledge, 2017), xi–xii.

<sup>48</sup> Ervand Abrahamian, "'Ali Shari'ati: Ideologue of the Iranian Revolution," *MERIP Reports*, no. 102 (1982): 24–28.

secular) worked to focus the opportunity for liberation in front of them with leftist ideologies, making a plea to the population and hoping to steer the PLO. While some identify these characteristics as those of ideologues, I have chosen to use the word “intellectual.” Intellectual is broader and more simplistic, describing an individual who is in a somewhat privileged position to have acquired a wealth of knowledge and seeks to apply it, purposefully, to his or her life. This term is typically more neutral in its connotations than “ideologue,” which could be seen as the pejorative version of “intellectual.” Some of those included in this study are not always understood as “intellectuals”; nonetheless, through their roles and actions, we can understand them to be just that.

Some perspective on the term “intellectuals” from Noam Chomsky is also helpful in identifying the functions of Palestinian and Arab intellectuals. Broadly seeking to debunk the elitism surrounding intellectualism, he writes sardonically, “anyone can be a moral individual, concerned with human rights and problems; but only a college professor, a trained expert, can solve technical problems by 'sophisticated' methods.” He continues:

Responsible, nonideological experts will give advice on tactical questions; irresponsible, 'ideological types' will 'harangue' about principle and trouble themselves over moral issues and human rights, or over the traditional problems of man and society...Obviously, these emotional, ideological types are irrational, since, being well-off and having power in their grasp, they shouldn't worry about such matters.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Noam Chomsky, *The Responsibility of Intellectuals* (New York: The New Press, 2017), 50.

Chomsky captures the sentiment felt by some of the intellectuals within this thesis towards the close of this period—in the early 1970s—as they expressed their frustrations at the decision of the PLO to accept the status quo and leave beyond larger dreams of a greater revolution. As Chomsky observes, others, less removed from their subjects and more involved in creating and understanding relevant ideologies are relegated to corners. Often seen as radical, their views are frequently disregarded. Said’s perspective on intellectuals complements Chomsky’s and also captures the tensions that arise within the PLO during this period: “I think the major choice faced by the intellectuals is whether to be allied with the stability of the victors or rulers—or the more difficult path—to consider that stability as a state of emergency threatening the less fortunate.”<sup>50</sup> This choice unfolded in the period under study, as “revolutionary intellectuals” began to clash with those who were more willing to settle for some semblance of liberation. In this study, I take a broad view of the term “intellectual,” understanding their roles to hold an importance often dismissed by those in more stable positions of power. Within this thesis and the context of the PLO in the 1960s and 1970s, the “revolutionary intellectual” has tended to be from the left, frequently adopting or seeking to adopt, for example, Marxist ideals—at least in the general sense.

The intentions and goals of the intellectuals in this study are what defines them as anti-colonial intellectuals. To gain a better understanding of this, Fanon’s work, with his focus on anti-colonial struggles, is particularly useful in framing this thesis and in understanding the Palestinian intellectuals’ function and role. Of course, Fanon’s context was different. The

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<sup>50</sup> Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (New York: Pantheon, 1994), 35.

settler-colonial nature of the ramifications of the Zionist project signify that, unlike under South African apartheid, Palestinians would be and are excluded rather than exploited by the dominant political system. This bears emphasising because of the comparisons I make between the intellectuals and Fanon's colonised intellectual. The position of Palestinians in society is thus significantly different from Fanon's reference points, such as the FLN in Algeria. Younis discusses the relationship between the availability of political power to the indigenous population and that group's status as either exploited or excluded. She notes, "Leverage is the preserve of some indigenous class but not others. It is the latent power of the 'economically exploited' class as opposed to the 'economically oppressed'."<sup>51</sup> This position of economic oppression, while far more advanced now than in the 1960s and 1970s, was yet another hurdle for the PLO. Gaining support from other states also provided its challenges, given that many took issue with the very existence of those states. This will be explored in Chapter Four.

Gramsci's concept of the intellectual also provides a relevant, general description of intellectuals as well as some understanding as to their purpose and potential function. Furthermore, his notion of the organic intellectual sheds light onto the difference between this newer generation of intellectuals and the older one that will be discussed in Chapter One. With some exceptions, while the intellectuals in this study were often doctors, lawyers, and the like, they often came from fairly humble means, and therefore were, arguably, closer to those to whom they spoke. Conversely, as Hroub explains, Palestinian associations during the 1930s and 1940s displayed "limited representation of society as a whole," adding that, "their leadership and most of their members were drawn from the upper middle class and 'notables.' Part of the

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<sup>51</sup> Younis, *Liberation and Democratization*, 30.

activism was more of an assertion of the social position and prestige of those notables than any sincere effort or sacrifice.”<sup>52</sup> This point will be clarified in Chapters One and Two, where the distinction between these two generations is described in detail.

Younis provides possible reasons as to why roles in leadership shift. She points to class as an important factor in determining the success of national liberation movements and describes that such shifts take place when:

[T]he leading class is undermined, thereby improving contenders’ chances. State repression, popular disaffection with a failing leadership, and/or the elimination of critical resources may all contribute to openings that permit shifts in leadership to occur. Accompanying each shift is a reassessment of movement objectives, strategies, tactics, and more, reflecting the relative strength of the classes within the alliance.

These differences prove to be critical for both the long and arduous process of national liberation as well as its outcome.<sup>53</sup>

Younis understands change in leadership to be, at least in part, due to power struggles between classes. It is likely that the shifts that took place in the PLO, shifts that caused the marginalisation of left-leaning intellectuals and factions, demonstrated some of the class differences that were present in the organisation. The possibility of class problems affecting the roles of the intellectuals will be explored as I discuss the unique position held by the intellectuals and their struggles to relate to those whom they worked to represent.

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<sup>52</sup> Hroub, "Palestinian Islamism," 60–61.

<sup>53</sup> Younis, *Liberation and Democratization*, 32.



The importance of class is particularly apparent if we consider the various types of advantages had by different classes. Younis describes class assets in the following way: “classes are differently endowed with conventional resources such as economic assets (i.e., material resources of various kinds), human assets (i.e., skills, education), organizational assets (i.e., associations of particular kinds), as well as structural power or leverage.”<sup>54</sup> Although the intellectuals were not so far removed from the populations, their academic inclinations gave them the opportunity for their position. Aside from this, it was the circumstances of the time that pushed them to dedicate their lives in the way that they did.

#### *Defining “Intellectual”: The Gramscian Approach*

This section provides space for exploration of the social standing of Gramsci’s organic intellectual and its significance for understanding our definition of intellectual. It also brings to light another component of Gramsci’s organic intellectuals that helps in understanding the intended role of the intellectuals in this study—empowering the masses in a revolutionary struggle. Gramsci states:

Each man, finally, outside of his professional activity, carries on some form of intellectual activity...he participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>55</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Antonio Gramsci* (London: ElecBook, the Electric Book Co., 1999), 140–41.

Kanafani neatly captures Gramsci's notion of intellectuals as those present in various fields of work—their work, no matter how seemingly distant from “intellectual” work, also providing a space for ideas to manifest themselves and for these individuals to be an authentic representation of their classes. This was undertaken within their various fields and through their participation in political parties, as well as through outreach, armed struggle, and political commitment. An interesting point made by Gramsci, one that further supports the approach taken in this thesis, is that being in a political party does not disqualify one from being considered an intellectual. He explains that “in the political party the elements of an economic social group get beyond that moment of their historical development and become agents of more general activities of a national and international character.”<sup>56</sup> A political party's role, he argues, has to do with the development of the categories of organic and traditional intellectuals, particularly in relation to the history of nations.<sup>57</sup> Intellectuals have been involved in politics, and have not necessarily chosen to maintain distance from such matters.<sup>58</sup> These intellectuals held their political dedication in high importance, understanding their efforts to be a defining point in their lives.

Many included in this study belonged to political parties, and even helped to lead them, seeking systemic change in their societies. Kanafani, an author and a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), discussed the significance of these two activities:

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 151–52.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>58</sup> As an example, the term “intellectual” rose to prominence around the time of the Dreyfus Affair, when Émile Zola defended Alfred Dreyfus against false accusations. The Dreyfusards “were guilty of ‘one of the most ridiculous eccentricities of our time...the pretension of raising writers, scientists, professors and philologists to the rank of supermen,’ who dare to ‘treat our generals as idiots, our social institutions as absurd and our traditions as unhealthy.’” Chomsky, *The Responsibility of Intellectuals*, 11.

“My political position springs from my being a novelist. Insofar as I am concerned, politics and the novel are an indivisible case and I can categorically state that I became politically committed because I am a novelist, not the opposite.”<sup>59</sup> Kanafani’s statement complements Gramsci’s visions of the versatility in the intellectual’s work.

Gramsci alerts us to the linkage of intellectual types with social strata—elites and masses—but which applies to the Palestinian case needs exploration. Gramsci describes that the traditional intellectual maintains close relations with the dominant classes, rather than with the masses.<sup>60</sup> We will see such a relationship within the context of Palestine in Chapter One, where I discuss elite Palestinian families who tended to have a close relationship with the British authorities during the British Mandate, and thus had a higher status than most Palestinians. As is displayed in Gramsci’s historical analysis, traditional intellectuals still served political functions within society.<sup>61</sup>

The “organic intellectual” cannot be directly applied to Palestinian and Arab intellectuals, in large part due to Gramsci’s context and focus on the proletariat and socio-economic factors. Economic production, for example, is less of a concern for the intellectuals than is the social and political realm that the intellectuals occupied. Nonetheless, its fundamentals—that of their serving a purpose beyond academic musings and, in large part,

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<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Stefan Wild, *Ghassan Kanafani: the Life of a Palestinian* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1975), 13.

<sup>60</sup> Gramsci, *Antonio Gramsci*, 154.

<sup>61</sup> He differentiates, still, from context to context, e.g. France versus England versus Germany, and so on and so forth. See, for example, Gramsci, *Antonio Gramsci*, 152–57.

arising from those whom they serve—bring to light some of the basic characteristics of those included in this thesis. Gramsci says of the organic intellectuals:

[E]very social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields.<sup>62</sup>

His concept of the organic intellectual also provides a relevant, general description of the type of social standing from which most of the intellectuals in this study come. Rather than being from the upper echelons of society, these individuals have much more connection to the general population; they came from it, and with this background, they sought change. Despite this background, nonetheless, the intellectuals still struggled to reach the masses. In the Palestinian and Arab context after the 1967 war, the concern (at least, ideally) of the newer generation of intellectuals was not as much about maintenance of ties with authorities as it was about working to create and maintain ties with the masses in order to fight against those powers.

Gramsci points out that oftentimes in trying to characterise intellectuals, we overlook many individuals in the search for those whose occupations conform to our general notions of what defines an intellectual. He explains:

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 134–35. It is worth noting that in the text, the term “strata” is glossed: “Gramsci tends, for reasons of censorship, to avoid using the word class in contexts where its Marxist overtones would be apparent, preferring (as for example in this sentence) the more neutral ‘social group’,” 134.

[T]he most widespread error of method seems to me that of having looked for this criterion of distinction in the intrinsic nature of intellectual activities, rather than in the ensemble of the system of relations in which these activities (and therefore the intellectual groups who personify them) have their place within the general complex of social relations.<sup>63</sup>

Gramsci emphasises the importance of intellectuals as revolutionary actors, whom he understands to be organic intellectuals, differentiating them from traditional intellectuals: “the mode of being the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence...but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, ‘permanent persuader’ and not just a simple orator.”<sup>64</sup> Gramsci understands intellectuals to be action-takers, who could be, and should be, involved in various lines of work other than simply the expression of their ideas. In Chapters One and Two, we will begin to see the difference between the type of intellectuals and political leaders that were prominent during the late-Ottoman and Mandate periods and those of 1967–1974. It is with this difference in leadership that I identify the intellectuals as distinct from the traditional leadership that had been prevalent in Palestinian society.

#### *Defining The Colonised Intellectual: The Fanonian Model*

I have understood Fanon’s colonised intellectual to hold the revolutionary potentials of the Palestinian and Arab intellectuals in this study. As described in *The Wretched of the Earth*, the colonised intellectual is one who has grown up under a colonial system and then works to

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<sup>63</sup> Gramsci, *Antonio Gramsci*, 139.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 141–42.

remove it both from him or herself and from the society.<sup>65</sup> While Palestine was not colonial in the same manner as other countries at the time, such as Algeria, the Resistance understood Zionism to be an occupying, colonial force. For them, colonialism was found in the existence of forces that worked to occupy and control their lives and land. Zionism and imperialism, both colonial forces, became the two primary targets of their anti-colonial efforts. To them, it was necessary not only to break ties with Western governments that supported Israel but also to remove Arab governments that remained tied to systems that the intellectuals saw as part of the reasons for the region's recent failures.

We can see connections to Fanon's colonised intellectual here because of their desire to liberate themselves from what they understood to be colonising forces, external and internal. Furthermore, through the urgency of the time and the 1948 and 1967 defeats, they recognised the pressure to change themselves as well and to use their skills for this cause rather than for other careers. While the colonised intellectual had to work to remove himself, or herself, from the chains of colonialism, so did the Palestinian and Arab intellectuals' hope to work to remove themselves, and their region, not only from what many of them saw as the chains of imperialism and Zionism, but also from the fundamental problems in their society that they believed were keeping it from reaching its full potential. This would go beyond a more obvious anti-colonial struggle against external forces, extending to a type of struggle against themselves and their own society. These qualities are what connects them to the notion of the colonised intellectuals as well as what makes them unique, even to their own time. The types of criticisms

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<sup>65</sup> Although I have used Constance Farrington's earlier English translation of *The Wretched of the Earth*, I have chosen to use "colonised intellectual" rather than "native intellectual." It is in closer keeping to Fanon's original term, *intellectuel colonisé*.

that we will find in the intellectuals' writings regarding the problems of the society of the time as well as their own mistakes in the anti-colonial struggle also connect them to Fanon's anti-colonial intellectual. As we can find described by Fanon:

The native [colonised] intellectual takes part, in a sort of auto-da-fé, in the destruction of all his idols: egoism, recrimination that springs from pride, and the childish stupidity of those who always want to have the last word. Such a colonized intellectual, dusted over by colonial culture, will in the same way discover the substance of village assemblies, the cohesion of people's committees, and the extraordinary fruitfulness of local meetings and groupments.<sup>66</sup>

While the sources of their internal struggles may have originated from different places, the concept of this struggle with oneself and its relation to the anti-colonial struggle that they must fight, remains. Additionally, both Fanon and intellectuals like al-Azm emphasise the importance of controlling the self-confidence and arrogance that has overtaken those in position to make political change. In the context of the Six-Day War, as will be discussed in Chapter Two, al-Azm is infuriated at the lackadaisical arrogance with which much of the region discussed, wrote, and acted when it came to supposed Arab military might over Israel. It seems that Fanon is frustrated by such ways within his own context.

For Fanon, the colonised intellectual has the potential to unite the community in the anti-colonial struggle. He emphasises not only the type of impact that intellectuals can have on the community, but also their role more generally. This is echoed in Gramsci and his notion of

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<sup>66</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 47.

the organic intellectual: “Every organic development of the peasant masses, up to a certain point, is linked to and depends on movements among the intellectuals.”<sup>67</sup> In terms of Palestinian and Arab intellectuals, this is, arguably, manifest in the extent to which armed struggle became not just part of their parties’ platforms, but reality. The *fedayeen* were vital in this struggle. They became focal points of resistance during the time, carrying out armed operations within the borders of Israel and elsewhere.<sup>68</sup> The extent to which the *fedayeen* were connected to the intellectuals, however, is a point of debate amongst them, and will be discussed particularly in Chapters Three and Four.

In addition to Zionism and imperialism came a third target, nationalism, which had grown in popularity throughout the region with the rise of Nasser and the Ba’thists. Nonetheless, it was proving less and less powerful against the colonial enemies they, and the nationalists, identified as a threat to their freedom. Thus, for many on the left, nationalism represented yet another element that needed to be combatted, seeing it as a kind of oppressive force, because of its failures to successfully combat imperialism and because of what they perceived to be Arab nationalism’s support of the petty bourgeoisie. This is echoed in Fanon’s notion of liberation, in which he distinguishes building a national consciousness from nationalism, as will be discussed in Chapter Five, in relation to the efforts of the leftist intellectuals of the PLO. These sentiments can also be found in Younis’s work, in which she

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<sup>67</sup> Gramsci, *Antonio Gramsci*, 149.

<sup>68</sup> Aside from armed guerrilla operations on the ground, plane hijackings were carried out during this time period. Some of these operations, were controversial and the extent to which they were condoned by members of the Resistance is questionable. At the least, it seems that not all were in favour of such activities. Once such example is the 1972 Munich Olympic attack on the Israeli Olympic team carried out by the Black September Organization, with many Fatah members taking part. See, for example: Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 308–10.



describes nationalism as “amorphous,” and benefitting “the dominant classes.”<sup>69</sup> Lastly, Greenstein provides a helpful summary of the significance of the nationalist approach in combatting colonialism and how it is distinct from the leftist approach:

The nationalist approach conceptualized the question of Palestine as a clash between indigenous Arabs seeking independence and foreign Jewish settlers acting to take their place and realize their own independence. The solution therefore consisted in restoring the rights of the indigenous population by reversing the process of settlement and colonization. This should be carried out for the entire country or, if impossible, for a part of the country at least.<sup>70</sup>

On the contrary, “the left-wing approach conceptualizes the question as a struggle for economic and territorial control between the global forces of imperialism and local populations.”<sup>71</sup> Although the extent to which Arab nationalism came to serve and represent the petty bourgeoisie is arguable, the Palestinian and Arab left perceived part of their role to be the development of a movement that more genuinely involved the populations at-large and to create what they saw as an entirely new path for their society.<sup>72</sup> Fanon also expresses hostility towards nationalist movements of the time. His discussion of the need to create a national consciousness—which he explicitly states is separate from nationalism—and his implication that the colonised intellectual needs to work towards creating this, sheds light on the nature of

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<sup>69</sup> Younis, *Liberation and Democratization*, 34.

<sup>70</sup> Greenstein, *Zionism and its Discontents*, 106.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Many would argue that the land policies and free education provided by Nasser are examples of the opposite.

anti-colonial resistance during the time period as well as on the growing hostility many of the Palestinian and Arab left had towards the nationalist movements within the region.<sup>73</sup> This becomes particularly relevant to Palestinian resistance post-1967, when the flaws of the Arab Nationalists and the Ba’thists are laid bare, which will be discussed further in Chapter Two.

### **Nationalism and the Anti-colonial Struggle**

For Fanon, nationalism is a representation of the empty promises of political parties that have failed to bring about the necessary radical changes for their populations. He writes, “when the nationalist leaders *say* something, they make quite clear they do not really *think* it.”<sup>74</sup> Ajami similarly raises similar criticisms of the Ba’thists and Arab nationalists in discussing their use of rhetoric, implying that these techniques demonstrated some of the emptiness of the movement: “Essentially romantic, it [nationalism] added to the pretensions and delusions and hence to the escapism of the language.”<sup>75</sup> This criticism of Arab nationalism and Ba’thism is also present in the work of Salem: “The poetic prose of Aflaq was inspiring, but it had nothing to say about housing, economic development, agricultural productivity, land reform and so forth.”<sup>76</sup> For the Palestinian Resistance, attempts at developing a national consciousness built on an anti-colonial struggle, are evident in their efforts to mobilise the *fedayeen* and promote general awareness of the Palestinian struggle, as well as larger resistance efforts. Aware of the criticisms and shortcomings of the period before 1967, many of the factions’ worked to

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<sup>73</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 148.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>75</sup> Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, 64.

<sup>76</sup> Salem, *Bitter Legacy*, 187.

distinguish their efforts from those of the Arab nationalists and Ba’thists before them. How to distinguish it, of course, became the subject of debates and the cause of fractures with the PLO. Furthermore, intellectuals post-1967 also accused each other of developing rhetoric without the necessary means to mobilise.

To Ajami, nationalism left unhealed wounds on the Resistance and the Arab world more generally, making it difficult to even understand what was happening in a constructive way. He writes: “The defeats that nationalism came to suffer meant that analysis would have no hope and that expression would alternate between melancholy over setbacks and delusions of grandeur.”<sup>77</sup> Striking the right balance between lamentation and broader, grand goals would be a challenge throughout the post-1967 period, and one that was not overcome. Thinking in light of creating a successful revolution, Fanon also discusses the necessity of a similar kind of balance when warning of the difficulties the intellectuals can have in maintaining a cohesive, united movement: “he [the intellectual] is occupied in action on a particular front, and...loses sight of the unity of the movement and in the event of failure at the local level he succumbs to doubt, even despair.”<sup>78</sup> In losing sight of the broader goals, successes become few and far between, setting the revolutionary movement up for failure. According to Ajami, in the Palestinian and Arab context, the defeats they faced left little room for finding the balance to create the type of constructive thought necessary for success. In the view of the intellectuals, opinions as to the extent to which they thought constructive thought was present varied. In speaking of the dangers of compliance with Western control, for example, Fanon explains that

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<sup>77</sup> Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, 34–35.

<sup>78</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 50.

the colonised intellectual can and must break free from any colonialist-thinking.<sup>79</sup> What becomes apparent in this thesis is that within the Palestinian context, the reverse can also take place. Towards the end of the period, many of the intellectuals criticised the PLO and some of its members for becoming conformist and distancing themselves further from the left and its goals and taking an approach that was more agreeable to the status quo and the diplomatic efforts of the West. Hauntingly, Fanon also discusses this in relation to the clarity of a movement's ideas, implying that the success of the anti-colonial struggle hangs on the intellectuals' efforts at creating a movement with a clear, coherent ideology:

Because the various means whereby decolonization has been carried out have appeared in many different aspects, reason hesitates and refuses to say which is a true decolonization, and which a false. We shall see that for a man who is in the thick of the fight it is an urgent matter to decide on the means and the tactics to employ: that is to say, how to conduct and organize the movement. If this coherence is not present there is only a blind will toward freedom, with the terribly reactionary risks which it entails. Anti-colonial movements hang on this.<sup>80</sup>

In discussing the struggles of the colonised intellectual, Fanon also addresses many of the realities faced by the Resistance in light of the anti-colonial struggle—of those who are not genuinely dedicated to struggle and of the dangers of losing sight of the meaning and purpose of the movement, etc. Whether it was the nationalist ideas that continued to loom large within the PLO in its early days or the new order set by figures such as Sadat and Henry Kissinger in the

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 47–49.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 59.

1970s, anti-colonial intellectuals could not seem to break through and create the type of change they were looking for. This will be discussed further in Chapter Five. This impasse had significant impact on the general direction that the PLO would take for years to come. These obstacles will be discussed throughout the thesis, as they are an integral part of the analysis of the events and discussions of the Resistance during this time period. Furthermore, the lack of focus on key elements of the leftist ideology that they espoused, such as secularism, calls for investigation into whether or not Marxist ideology suited Arab society. This point also raises questions regarding the extent to which it was the ideas themselves that did not work within the given context, or whether it was the execution of them that hampered possibilities for success.

### **Structure of the Thesis**

What follows is a brief overview of the chapters of this thesis, with an emphasis on how each one relates to the research question.<sup>81</sup> The first chapter explores what I understand to be the intellectual heritage of those involved in Resistance in the 1960s and 1970s. In it, intellectual involvement in movements to change the shape of the Middle East in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries will be discussed. Special attention is given to individuals, such as Constantine Zurayk and George Antonius, who seem to have direct ideological connections to those of the target research period. The chapter will also frame the secular focus of many of the individuals who come to play important roles in the PLO in the 1960s and 1970s, and how that

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<sup>81</sup> Portions of this thesis will appear in a forthcoming issue of the journal *Interventions*.

was in opposition to some of the failed religiously-motivated attempts at a resistance movement during this earlier time.

The second chapter frames the period in question, highlighting the unique nature of this time period and the opportunities it gave the Palestinian Resistance. Beginning in 1967, in this chapter I discuss many of the initial disappointments expressed by the intellectuals in regards to the defeat. I explore the rise of the PLO and its intellectuals' understanding of their unique chance to change the focus of resistance at that time, to, for some, a Palestinian-focused one, and to others, one that should include a larger revolution within the region. These changes came about in large part due to the failures of Arab nationalism. The unique nature of the time period and the PLO's efforts to frame their movement within that and the intellectuals' efforts to understand and define their role as revolutionary actors of a left-leaning, largely secular movement will be discussed. Primary sources are analysed to begin to explore the intricacies of this period and the intellectuals' take on the events of the time.

In Chapter Three, through the intellectuals' reflections on the time period, I discuss the different paths taken by the intellectuals and their factions in order to reach their perceived goal of liberation. I present these differing ideologies as paradigms, which assist in accounting for and understanding the fractures within the PLO soon after it takes centre-stage in the latter-half of 1967. It also begins to demonstrate the differences expressed by the intellectuals in regards to their perceived roles. One ideological difference that creates constant tension is the question of complete pan-Arab revolution versus limited Palestinian liberation, a point which calls into question the very purpose of the intellectuals and, by the end of the period, comes to represent, in many ways, the difference between those following the status quo and those who

reject it. Particular attention is also given to the constant fracturing of the PLO due to these ideological differences, demonstrating both the differing perceptions the intellectuals had in regards to their role and opening the question as to the extent to which these fractures took a toll on the Resistance or whether they were primarily positive demonstrations of the PLO's democratic efforts.

In Chapter Four, the intellectuals' discussions of the problems that quickly overwhelm the Resistance after 1967 come to the fore. Here, I explore them through the words of the intellectuals, documenting the problems as well as evaluating the extent to which these problems reflect limitations of the intellectuals' roles, whether those were their own shortcomings or simply a product of the time. Much attention is given to the difficulties related to efforts at involving the masses in their struggle. Contradictions within the Resistance movement's struggles, such as working with Arab regimes while ultimately fighting against them, is also discussed. These types of problems mark the fundamental challenges that the Resistance faced in shaping their movement and working to achieve their goals.

The fifth chapter focuses on criticisms of the intellectuals and the extent to which those relate to the explanatory variables noted earlier, in particular the shortcomings of the intellectuals. Attention is also given to the increasing marginalisation faced by the intellectuals within the PLO, in large part due to the rise of statism inside the PLO, as well as within the region at large during the final years of the period. In focusing on criticisms of the intellectuals' strategies and general ideas for revolution, we are better able to identify the extent to which their tactics for implementing revolutionary change or the ideas they proposed were at fault for the failures of the period. This is in contrast to the possibility that the political manoeuvres of

those at helm of the organisation, Arafat in particular, were responsible for the failures of the PLO. The pragmatic approaches taken by a certain portion of the PLO left others who had larger, revolutionary goals at a loss. Despite the PLO's acceptance on the global political stage, many within the organisation became increasingly disenchanted with it. These changes negatively affected the intellectuals' role within the movement; as statism settled within the PLO, the intellectuals had less of an opportunity to work towards their more radical goals. While factors outside of their control contributed to their decline, there were also a number of factors caused by their own missteps. Additionally, armed efforts became increasingly extreme and worked against the Resistance's efforts to achieve their goals. Fanon, with his concept of the colonised intellectual, becomes particularly useful in assessing the strengths and the weaknesses of the intellectuals in working towards their revolutionary goals. Along with exploring their missteps in relation to the missteps Fanon predicts anti-colonial intellectuals will take, I spend considerable time questioning and exploring the extent to which the ideologies they were developing were not synchronised with their lived realities.

In the Conclusion, I provide an overview of the themes that have emerged, analysing their significance to the limitations and potentials of the intellectuals and their roles. Some attention is given to discussing the ways in which this period provides longer-lasting insights for the Palestinian struggle. The question of the cause of the failures of the period is brought forth, with particular attention to the explanatory variables previously discussed— the shortcomings of the intellectuals; a lack of fit between the ideas they developed and intransigent political realities; and external factors. I will also discuss what appears to be the cyclical motion of the Palestinian struggle; a pattern that was the cause of much debate and frustration in 1967, as



expressed by al-Azm, for example. The complaints voiced by the intellectuals in 1974 seem, poignantly, to mirror those of the earlier period.

Sayigh highlights the unique experience of the Palestinians: "Rarely, though, has a whole people been subjected simultaneously to uprooting, expulsion, dispersal, and complete denial of nationhood, as have the Palestinians."<sup>82</sup> This is what makes the work of the Palestinian intellectuals unique as well. While they had an opportunity, they also had unique challenges that came with their work. Rather than working towards liberation within their country, they had to construct operations oftentimes from outside. Furthermore, their closeness to others in the region and the power of Arab nationalism led to visions of a pan-Arab struggle. It is these elements that make the Palestinian intellectuals' efforts different and bring colour to their story.

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<sup>82</sup> Yezid Sayigh, "The Politics of Palestinian Exile," *Third World Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (1987): 29.

## Chapter One:

### Foundations for Resistance—Palestinian Intellectual Heritage, 1836–1948

The history of Palestine, the land and the diverse groups of people who inhabit it—and have inhabited it in the past—has been written about and discussed by scholars over an extended period of time.<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this chapter is not to detail those findings. Instead, it is concerned with the roots of the Palestinian resistance movement, and more specifically, the intellectual inheritance of those individuals who are the focal point of this research. I seek to draw connections between the work of intellectuals during this early time period and that of 1967 to 1974, demonstrating the cyclical nature of the movement; showing how the efforts of the intellectuals, and even the types of obstacles they face, are repeated. We will see the appearance of Arab nationalism, the dangers of maintaining ties to ruling powers in the region, and the desire for and efforts at popular struggle by the non-traditional leadership. This chapter will introduce some of the key intellectuals active in Greater Syria during the late Ottoman period, up to the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. It will also discuss the increase in intellectual activity and the establishment of societies—secret and public—that worked to promote ideas such as Arab nationalism and anti-colonialism.

This early intellectual activity was important to the development of Palestinian resistance to various forms of colonisation in the region. Providing this context and background

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006); Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal, *The Palestinian People: A History* (Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 2003); and Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement 1949–1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

to the work of Palestinian intellectuals who were active from 1967 to 1974, will give a deeper sense of the origins of many of the ideologies considered vital to Palestinian resistance during this period, such as Arab nationalism and Marxism.

Arab intellectuals active from the decline of the Ottoman Empire to the establishment of the British Mandate of Palestine in 1920, met with approaches to state nationalism that were unfamiliar to them and, indeed, to the Middle East at large. New borders and kingdoms acted as one of the catalysts for the new forms of nationalism that emerged in the region, such as local nationalisms (Syrian nationalism, Palestinian nationalism, etc.) and the resistance movements that coalesced around them. These also developed due to the unique events occurring within the borders of each state, such as Jewish migration to Palestine and French rule in Syria. Debates within the Palestinian resistance regarding support for wider forms of nationalism, such as Ba'thism, as opposed to regional forms, or for causes that extend beyond the scope of nationalism, such as class-aligned or religiously-aligned causes, continued into the period of this study.

Notable during this early time period, was the establishment of journals and newspapers by political societies and independent intellectuals, for the purpose of spreading their ideas and opinions on issues such as the political machinations of the British and French and the growth of Zionism. In addition, a number of societies were created and educational institutions were formed to create an environment in which students could learn about their heritage as well as important issues of the day.

The “most outspoken critics [of Ottoman rule and external powers’ presence in the Arab World in general] were the intellectual leaders who had grown to maturity in the nationalist

atmosphere of the two decades before British occupation.”<sup>2</sup> These intellectuals, such as Boutrus al-Bustani (1819–1883), Faris Nimr (1856–1951), and Abdul Rahman al-Kawakibi (c.1854–1902) set a precedent for the manner in which resistance would be discussed, as well as the modes by which resistance would take place. Not all intellectuals took a nationalist path, but it was, nonetheless, a point of inspiration for many.

The period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, during which these intellectuals flourished, is referred to as the *Nahda*, a word that corresponds to renaissance or awakening. As pointed out by Max Weiss and Jens Hanssen, “the Nahda existed before there was a word for it,” noting that Albert Hourani, for example, never used the term.<sup>3</sup> The term was made famous by George Antonius in his 1939 work, *The Arab Awakening*.<sup>4</sup> Antonius’s work provides useful insights into the time period and the controversies and challenges it brought. His work, of course, does not come without criticism.

This chapter contains secondary resources that describe and give details of key figures of this time period and the intellectuals who took part in shaping Greater Syria, and Palestinian resistance more specifically. Antonius’s *The Arab Awakening* is particularly important due to his rich research and dedication to Arab independence. Antonius, a Greater Syrian who worked for the British throughout his career, of course had his own biases, as will be illustrated below. Nonetheless, what should also be noted is that *The Arab Awakening* was written after Antonius

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<sup>2</sup> Adnan Abu-Ghazaleh, *Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine during the British Mandate* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1973), 16.

<sup>3</sup> Jens Hanssen and Max Weiss, eds., *Arabic Thought beyond the Liberal Age: Towards an Intellectual History of the Nahda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1938).

quit his job as an officer in the British Mandate of Palestine.<sup>5</sup> There is strong evidence to suggest that he changed his somewhat favourable and trustworthy stance on the British, ultimately understanding them to be foes to Arab independence. His text, even considering the criticisms of it, is thus a nuanced source that reflects his days in support of the British, his eventual bitterness towards them, and his ultimate support and favour of Arab nationalism.<sup>6</sup> Overall, it is a helpful source in making connections between the political activity of this early period and the political activity of 1967 to 1974.

Despite Antonius's changing opinion of the British, his discontent with the Ottoman Empire remains constant. There were, of course, others at the time who were more allegiant to the Ottomans and were interested in preserving the Empire. Amongst the various opinions of those who supported the Ottomans were those who preferred to remain with the Empire, but wanted the Arabs within it—and areas with a majority Arab population, such as Greater Syria—to maintain their own cultural heritage. Moreover, while Antonius draws from numerous primary sources, he has been criticised for using, at times, less reliable sources, such as oral reports. Such sources, it has been argued, lead to a biased understanding of, for example, the extent to which certain measures undertaken by Ottoman residents were perceived as anti-Empire and pro-Arab nationalism.<sup>7</sup> In general, problems have been found in Antonius's assumption that anti-Ottoman nationalism was the main concern for groups in the late nineteenth century. Figures who supported the sultan as well as documents that expressed

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<sup>5</sup> Susan Silsby, "George Antonius: The Formative Years," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 15, no. 4 (1986): 85.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Liora Lukitz, "The Antonius Papers and 'The Arab Awakening,' over Fifty Years On," *Middle Eastern Studies* 30, no. 4 (1994): 884; and Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Province of Syria and the Mutasarrifiyya of Mount Lebanon (1866–1880)," *Turkish Historical Review* 4, no. 2 (2013): 132–33.

those assertions will be discussed, but as this thesis will focus on the work of intellectuals who in large part were supporters of Arab nationalism in the early days of the movement, their inspiration and heritage largely stems from those who supported similar causes at this time.

Lastly, there was considerable work taking place during this early period by Islamic leaders, some of whom will be mentioned as well. Just as it is possible to make connections between this period—the Mandate period in particular—and the PLO’s factions from 1967–1974, it is also possible to make connections between the work of Islamic groups then and later on, and even to demonstrate concerns shared by all. For example, the work of ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam (1882–1935), “Palestine’s first Salafiyya modernist Islamic leader...has been credited with introducing the idea of armed struggle to modern Palestinian politics.”<sup>8</sup> Milton-Edward’s notes his continued significance in Palestinian identity and resistance, as evidenced, for example in Hamas’s al-Qassam Brigade. He, as well as other Islamic thinkers of the time, was concerned about “what he perceived as the backwardness and moral debasement of Muslims of his day.”<sup>9</sup> This is particularly significant, because, as we will see in Chapter Five, “backwardness” is also a term that holds significant meaning and concern from some of the secular, leftist intellectuals of 1967–1974. In general, Islamic modernist thinking during this time often focused on facing “the challenges...triggered by increasing Western hegemony in the Middle East.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), 12. It should be noted that al-Qassam’s birthdate is disputed. Hamdi al-Husseini is not related to the al-Husseinis of Jerusalem. See Weldon C. Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation: Arab Nationalists and Popular Politics in Mandate Palestine* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 57–58.

<sup>9</sup> Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine*, 15.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

It was the *types* of movements taking place that I identify as having a strong connection to the political atmosphere of the 1960s and 1970s in the Arab world; an atmosphere bustling with enthusiasm and activity. The sea of conversation taking place amongst intellectuals during the late Ottoman era, in person and through journals and newspapers, not only revolved around the modernisation of Arabic language, literature, and science, but also around the pressing political concerns of the day. These concerns were the decline of the Ottoman Empire and, more profoundly, the rise of an awareness and a celebration of Arab culture and unity. The latter would prove to have strategic importance in the Mandate period, when the increased presence of the colonial powers and their support of Zionism was felt by Muslim and Christian Palestinians as an imminent threat to Arab unity and to their very existence in Palestine. The intellectuals of the Mandate period, thus extended the work of their predecessors, creating more clearly political forms of the Arab societies and organisations established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. “These men kept alive a national consciousness through the books they wrote during the Mandate. They became the leaders of a cultural nationalist movement.”<sup>11</sup> Literary clubs as well as secret societies organised by them, helped to create a more united resistance against colonialism, imperialism, and Zionism. Others, however, worked to restore the glory days of the Ottoman Empire.

As with any population, the challenges faced by the Palestinians depended, in large part, on the decisions made by the governing bodies of the time.<sup>12</sup> For example, under Sultan Abdul Hamid II (1876–1909), censorship was more prevalent than it had previously been, thereby

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<sup>11</sup> Abu-Ghazaleh, *Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine during the British Mandate*, 17.

<sup>12</sup> The very term “Palestinians” is debatable as a descriptor in this period, but the sense of local inhabitants in this Levantine territory is clear.

seeing a restriction in the establishment of newspapers and journals. The nineteenth century, particularly the latter half, is also considered a period of decline in the Ottoman Empire, ultimately leading to its defeat at the end of World War I. The Crimean War (1853–1856), the rule of Muhammad Ali Pasha (1769–1849) and his son Ibrahim Pasha (1789–1848), and the power struggle between the Ottomans, Britain, France, and Russia rocked the Ottoman Empire and its inhabitants. In Greater Syria, the increasing presence of foreign powers, on top of the presence of the Ottomans, could be seen as both a help and a hindrance. On the one hand, Muhammad Ali Pasha and Ibrahim Pasha worked to establish schools in the region; intellectual spaces flourished; missionaries, who worked with local intellectuals and public servants, established schools that functioned in Arabic and were, in large part, responsible for bringing the printing presses to the region. On the other hand, imperialism and the pressure for the Arabs to align with either the British, the French, or the Ottomans, was growing. The Arab choice to back the British, rather than the Ottomans, during World War I, ironically in order to remove a “foreign” power, is indicative of such pressure. Furthermore, the presence, in the region, of Muhammad Ali and Ibrahim, also saw the stirring of popular revolt against the Pashas, as a foreign power. Thus, not only was there a struggle to maintain Arab culture, there was also the added difficulty of undertaking such a struggle during a period of broader political upheaval.

There is debate regarding the precise catalyst of the flourishing of ideas and scholarship at this time. Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal argue that it was the Arab Revolt of 1834 that signified the start of revolts of the modern age, demonstrated organisation against a common enemy (in this case, the Ottomans under Muhammad Ali and his son Ibrahim Pasha),



and created the general sense of Palestinian peoplehood that unified multiple classes.<sup>13</sup> This unification is particularly significant in light of the efforts at unity and engagement of lower classes on the part of the intellectuals from 1967 to 1974. These efforts will be the subject of discussion in the upcoming chapters, particularly Chapter Three.

Antonius discusses the importance of Muhammad Ali's establishment of schools in Greater Syria, as well as his openness to missionaries and their work, as a primary catalyst. Important events such as these will be discussed, without giving any one primacy. Due in part to the pioneering development of education systems and institutions, the rise of an educated class of Arabs contributed to an awareness of the political environment of the time. Newspapers and journals, such as *al-Muqtataf* (Elite, established in 1898) and *Filastin* (Palestine, established in 1911), enabled intellectuals to express their ideas. Furthermore, the occurrence of popular revolts, the growth of schools, the circulation of printed materials, and the rise of politically-conscious societies, such as the Syrian Scientific Society (established in 1857) and al-Fatat (Young Arab Society, established in 1911), along with political parties, such as Istiqlal (Independence, established in Palestine in 1932), led to increased awareness of both Arab and Palestinian identities, making this period an ideal launching point to introduce the topic of this thesis.

The intellectuals of 1967–1974 have continued what was started by intellectuals of the late Ottoman period and the British Mandate period. Ghassan Kanafani, who was an active contributor to Palestinian resistance from 1967 to 1974, also acknowledged the importance of

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<sup>13</sup> Kimmerling and Migdal, *The Palestinian People*, 5–7. In terms of Palestinian peoplehood, Kimmerling and Migdal note that the revolt united “dispersed Bedouins, rural sheikhs, urban notables, mountain fellaheen, and Jerusalem religious figures,” 7.

the growth of schools and societies in this early period, which, he states, occurred, with foreign help.<sup>14</sup> In this chapter, important figures will be discussed chronologically to illuminate events of the time that ultimately shaped the landscape of Palestine. Of note, will be their contributions via the formation of societies, the creation of publications, the establishment of an education system in various parts of Greater Syria, and the growth of ideas and ideologies, such as the intellectual current that came to be known, in the mid-twentieth century, as Arab nationalism.

### **Discontent Spurs Revolt and an “Awakening”**

Over the course of the period discussed in this chapter, anti-imperial social movements were growing in popularity and strength. This was in part due to the burgeoning discontent over the various powers present in Greater Syria. In 1834, Palestinians and other inhabitants of Greater Syria rebelled against the ruling authority of Muhammad Ali Pasha, who, along with his son, Ibrahim Pasha, was working to control the Fertile Crescent. A corvée system had been put in place, in which the peasants were forced to work without pay for the Pasha. Furthermore, forced military conscription was enacted.<sup>15</sup> According to Kimmerling and Migdal, the Great Arab Revolt of 1834 was an “attempt to stave off the momentous changes instituted by Egyptian empire builders, who ruled the country through most of the 1830s.”<sup>16</sup> Kimmerling also notes

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<sup>14</sup> Ghassan Kanafani, *Thawrat 36–39 fī Filasṭīn: khalfiyāt wa tafāṣīl wa taḥlīl* [The Revolution of 36–39 in Palestine: Background, Details, and Analysis] (Gaza: Markaz al-Dirāsāt al-Jamāhīrīyah, 2004), 31.

<sup>15</sup> Yvette Talhamy, "The Nusayri and Druze Minorities in Syria in the Nineteenth Century: The Revolt against the Egyptian Occupation as a Case Study," *Middle Eastern Studies* 48, no. 6 (2012): 981–82.

<sup>16</sup> Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal, *Palestinians: The Making of a People* (New York: Free Press, 1993), 5.

that Egypt's "conquest of Palestine...signified the first application of the territorial state," and hence spurred modern Palestinian history.<sup>17</sup> While the opinion of these two scholars is difficult to fully confirm, the significance of popular revolt to Palestinian identity is undeniable.<sup>18</sup> Kimmerling points out that once Ottoman rule was restored in 1841, there was little reason for the 1834 Revolt to be memorialised, as the Palestinian notables were in favour of both Ottoman dominance and maintaining ties with the Egyptians.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, what remains is the existence of a popular revolt that could provide a model for later revolts, as well as an inspiration for opponents of imperialism and colonialism.

Interestingly, Antonius identifies the same year as the start of the of what is essentially the Arab "awakening" referred to in his title, but focuses on a different event. He describes how the establishment of new educational institutions, as well as an overall openness towards the work of missionaries in Greater Syria, under the reign of the Pashas, "opened the door to Western missionary enterprise; and, by so doing, it gave free play to two forces, one French and the other American, which were destined between them to become the foster-parents of the Arab resurrection."<sup>20</sup> Antonius explains that prior to the early nineteenth century, Arabic printing presses were scarce, and Arabic newspapers and periodicals "were totally unknown."<sup>21</sup> The flourishing of such mediums during this time period draws a helpful, illustrative parallel to

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<sup>17</sup> Baruch Kimmerling, "The Formation of Palestinian Collective Identities: The Ottoman and Mandatory Periods," *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no. 2 (2000): 57.

<sup>18</sup> This will be demonstrated in the upcoming chapters, particularly Chapter Two, when discussing the efforts of the intellectuals, and the PLO more generally, to define and present the Palestinian cause to their people and to the world.

<sup>19</sup> Kimmerling, "The Formation of Palestinian Collective Identities," 58–59.

<sup>20</sup> Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 35.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

the type of environment present in the Palestinian intellectual community from 1967 to 1974. During this time, many factions and journals were established in which intellectuals debated and discussed the events of the time. Antonius denotes the year 1834 as a pivotal point of change in the culture of the region. Prior to that, the lack of printing presses and other means to express ideas went alongside a decline in the Arabic language and finally, according to Antonius, the decline of Arab power and civilisation, “which received their death-blow with the Ottoman conquest.”<sup>22</sup> With 1834, came the reopening of a men’s college at ‘Aintura, which helped to form writers and thinkers, as well as the establishment of Ibrahim’s new policies towards education.<sup>23</sup> As an example of the type of effort being made within the realm of the Arabic language and its effect on the political movements of the time, al-Bustani wrote an encyclopaedia that drew upon European sources and contained a wealth of information on Arabic literary and historical heritage.<sup>24</sup> Hourani explains that al-Bustani’s work, which also includes the editing of periodicals, “contributed to the creation of modern Arabic expository prose, of a language true to its past in grammar and idiom, but made capable of expressing simply, precisely, and directly the concepts of modern thought.”<sup>25</sup> Indeed it is not difficult to see how this development of the Arabic language contributed to the work of intellectuals then and into the future. Furthermore, such work is precisely the type that adds to the general sense of “awakening” on which Antonius focuses, as works like this encyclopaedia help to revive and

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 39.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Albert Habib Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 99–102. Dates for al-Bustani found in Khalil Abou Rijali, “Boutros al-Bustani,” *Prospects: The Quarterly Review of Comparative Education* XXIII, no. 1/2 (1993): 125.

<sup>25</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 100.

celebrate the traditions and contributions of the Arabs through history. Some within the Palestinian intellectual community worked to document Palestinian history in a way that turned towards nationalism. Tarif Khalidi describes the dictionary and encyclopaedia as forms of Palestinian historiography, that work to document and bring importance to all elements of the Palestinian landscape.<sup>26</sup> One such example is *Scholars and Rulers in Rural Palestine* by Ahmad Samih Khalidi (1896–1951),<sup>27</sup> in which was documented famous men from the Palestinian countryside.<sup>28</sup> Tarif Khalidi notes that, in such works, “the matter is scholarly but the spirit is nationalist. They are shot through with a sense of urgency, an awareness that the very soil of Palestine was about to change its character, while the dictionary form seeks to capture a fleeting historical reality and to record it for posterity.”<sup>29</sup>

### **Education Reform and Missionary Work**

Missionary work in the mid-nineteenth century in Greater Syria saw the opening of schools that were mostly operating in Arabic. As the missionaries worked with intellectuals of the area to establish the curriculum of the schools and to run them, these schools offered students an opportunity to learn in Arabic and to have a greater understanding of Arab history and culture. Antonius describes three different categories of schools created in Greater Syria during Ibrahim’s time: Catholic missions, Egyptian schools, and American and French missions.<sup>30</sup> These

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<sup>26</sup> Tarif Khalidi, "Palestinian Historiography: 1900–1948," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 10, no. 3 (1981): 65.

<sup>27</sup> *Ahl al-‘ilm wal-ḥukm fī rīf Filasṭīn*

<sup>28</sup> Khalidi, "Palestinian Historiography," 65.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 40.

efforts at education are reminiscent of the efforts of education made in the creation of the Palestine Research Center (PRC) in 1965, by Fayez Sayigh (1922–1980), and the PRC’s aim to conduct research on all areas related to Palestine, employing young, less-experienced individuals to become researchers.<sup>31</sup> Fayiz’s brother, Anis Sayigh (1931–2009), became the head of the PRC in 1966. The brother’s parents were devout Christians—the father a minister—who had raised the children with an emphasis on the education and intellectuality for which this period is often known.<sup>32</sup>

The Egyptians established primary schools throughout Greater Syria as well as secondary colleges in certain major towns. Antonius notes that, beyond providing education for learning purposes, Ibrahim Pasha intended schools to be used “as an instrument to serve his political aims and military needs. He was keen on sowing...the seed of Arab national consciousness.”<sup>33</sup> Ibrahim also created government-funded colleges for Muslim students. These colleges were to act as preparatory training for a military career, but they ceased to function, with the withdrawal of Egypt from Greater Syria in 1840. Antonius points out that members of the community, wary of having their children readied for military careers, were inspired to open alternative schools. “And with this incentive at work,” Antonius explains, “an active interest in secular education was created, which remained alive after Ibrahim’s departure, and gathered strength as the years went by.”<sup>34</sup> Secularism also became an important part of the goals to which the Resistance, and the PLO in particular, strove, from 1967 to 1974.

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<sup>31</sup> Anis Sayigh, *Anīs Ṣāyigh ‘an Anīs Ṣāyigh* [Anis Sayigh on Anis Sayigh] (Beirut: Riyad El Rayyes, 2006), 231.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 15–75.

<sup>33</sup> Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 40.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

From 1839 to 1844, various Catholic missions opened schools in Beirut, Ghazir (the school there was later transferred to Beirut, where it became the University of St. Joseph), and Zahleh, and in 1872 and 1873, in Damascus and Aleppo, respectively.<sup>35</sup> In 1847, Jesuit missions established a printing press in the region. According to Antonius, the American missions placed importance on Arabic literary heritage, as a means to regain Greater Syria's "lost inheritance."<sup>36</sup> They moved their printing press from Malta to Beirut and began to print textbooks in Arabic, with the help of al-Bustani and Nasif al-Yazeji. The missionaries also began to open schools across Greater Syria.<sup>37</sup> Antonius argues that the American missionaries' focus on Arabic language and Arabic literature supported the efforts of Arab nationalism. These missionaries understood the importance of language and literature as a unifying factor for the population and in this regard, "they [American missionaries] were the pioneers; and because of that, the intellectual effervescence which marked the first stirrings of the Arab revival owes most to their labours."<sup>38</sup>

### **Early Forms of Resistance: Clubs and Societies**

Intellectuals, at the time, formed societies, many of which also produced journals. These societies could be seen as precursors to the political factions that came into existence between 1967 and 1974, as most of the societies had political motivations and worked towards independence from occupying powers. Those intellectuals involved in the aforementioned

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 44.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 41–42.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 43.

educational efforts made up a large part of the Arab intellectual community at that time, and played an important role in documenting society. It was al-Yazeji and al-Bustani who first worked to establish a learned society in Greater Syria, working with a missionary friend to propel their project forward. In 1847, the *Society of Arts and Sciences* came into being. Members, aside from al-Yazeji and al-Bustani, included missionaries such as Eli Smith.<sup>39</sup> The society lasted for five years, meeting fortnightly to present papers. It also had “a modest but useful library,” of which al-Yazeji was the librarian.<sup>40</sup> This society was influential insofar as it was the first “of its kind ever established in Syria or in any other part of the Arab world.”<sup>41</sup> Subsequently, through the time period under discussion, a number of other societies were established. While the presence or absence of a political focus varied from society to society, in some ways, their leadership as well as the formation and, at times, dissolution of these societies is similar to that of the existence and constant creation of new factions of the PLO from 1967 to 1974. Factions within the PLO were, in large part, established and led by intellectuals, many of whom worked to hold on to certain ideals. At times, when they felt that these ideals could not be realised within the confines of a specific faction, they created a new faction, and even established competing journals through which they could circulate their ideas. The creation of the PLO’s own journal and institute, with intellectuals at its helm, is also reminiscent of some of the societies established during this early period. Moreover, many of the societies worked for the political and societal betterment of their communities, be it

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 52.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.



through participation in popular uprisings or through the expression of discontent and the spread of ideas, through newspapers and journals.

Antonius identifies the massacre of 1860 as a critical point in Arab history, and in the awakening of Arabs to the importance of a nationalist struggle, against rule from external powers. The 1860 massacre, according to him, was a result of sectarian tensions—between Druzes, Christians, and Muslims—and the exploitation of these tensions by the English, the French, and the Ottomans.<sup>42</sup> The upheaval of this time, as well as the increasing presence of foreign powers, created an atmosphere that would act as a catalyst for change and resistance from Arab community members.

For the Syrian Scientific Society, “an interest in the progress of the country as a national unit was now their incentive, a pride in the Arab inheritance their bond.”<sup>43</sup> The establishment of this society was an important point in the history of Arab nationalism in that it was, according to Antonius, “the first outward manifestation of a collective national consciousness, and...the cradle of a new political movement.”<sup>44</sup> During one of the society’s secret meetings al-Yazeji’s son Ibrahim recited his famous poem, “Arise, ye Arabs, and awake,” which quickly became a symbol of Arab nationalism.<sup>45</sup> In the poem, Ibrahim al-Yazeji also expresses frustration at the lack of unity of the Arabs and warns that although they are the majority, they will be defeated if they are careless and lackadaisical. Such thoughts return after the defeat in

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 58–60.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 54–55.

1967. The pupils of al-Bustani and Nasif al-Yazeji were the first to experience the recovery of the Arab literary and cultural heritage.<sup>46</sup>

Other societies, which will be discussed in the next section, were also created after the Egyptian withdrawal in 1840 and the commencement of Sultan Abdul Hamid II's rule. Many of these had clear political objectives in mind. The Syrian Arab Society was established in 1857 by al-Bustani and al-Yazeji. In the opinion of Abu-Ghazaleh, this group was important because it worked to support Arab nationalism. He explains that "it brought together a group of Arabs with a novel idea: pride in their Arab heritage."<sup>47</sup> Societies that worked for Arab nationalism and autonomy continued to be established during this time period. This initial push for Arab nationalism became nearly ubiquitous in the political groups of 1967–1974.

## **Ottoman Decline**

### *Expanding Space for Intellectuals: The Growth of Newspapers and Journals*

The accession of Sultan Abd al-Hamid II in 1876, brought increased censorship to Palestinian media. As a result, some Palestinians left for Europe, only to return after the implementation of the 1908 constitution, which relaxed many of the censorship laws.<sup>48</sup> At this point, and up until the start of World War I, many newspapers and journals appeared. These outlets expressed the varying views of the Palestinian intelligentsia.<sup>49</sup> Scholars such as Najib Nassar (1865–1948), Ruhi al-Khalidi (1861–1913), 'Isa al-'Isa (1878–1950) and others began to

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>47</sup> Abu-Ghazaleh, *Arab Cultural Nationalism*, 7.

<sup>48</sup> Khalidi, "Palestinian Historiography," 63.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

focus on Zionism.<sup>50</sup> At this point as well, Arab unity, regardless of Christian or Muslim religious background, became important and indeed visible.<sup>51</sup> ‘Isa al-‘Isa later established (with his cousin Yusuf al-‘Isa) the daily newspaper *Filastin*, which “came to be relied upon throughout the Arab world for news of Zionist policy initiatives and the progress of Zionist colonization in Palestine, thereby playing an important role in establishing Zionism as an issue that concerned all Arabs.”<sup>52</sup>

Scientific and literary journals became an important element in the spreading of ideas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Greater Syria.<sup>53</sup> One such example is *al-Muqtataf* (“The Chosen”), established by Ya’qub Sarruf (1852–1927) and Nimr. This was one of “the earliest Arabic scientific and literary daily magazine[s].”<sup>54</sup> Sarruf and Nimr are considered by some to be the “fathers of Arabic journalism.” *Al-Muqtataf* contained Western scientific papers and literature translated into Arabic.<sup>55</sup> Sarruf’s and Nimr’s other publication *al-Muqattam* (a mountain in Cairo), was “the first Arabic political and literary daily to appear in the Arab world,” containing articles with “a marked nationalist flavor.”<sup>56</sup> Literary journals also offered an opportunity for intellectuals to celebrate the Arabic language through their writing, thus demonstrating the importance of Arabic as a unifying factor for the people of the region.

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Khalidi quotes Semitic philologist Father AS Marmarji (1881–1963), from his seminal text *Buldāniyyat Filastīn al-‘Arabīyyah* [Topographical Historical Dictionary of Arab Palestine] (1948). Khalidi, “Palestinian Historiography,” 64.

<sup>52</sup> Khalidi, *The Iron Cage*, 91, 93, 94.

<sup>53</sup> Abdulrazzak Patel, *The Arab Nahdah: The Making of the Intellectual and Humanist Movement* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 213.

<sup>54</sup> Abu-Ghazaleh, *Arab Cultural Nationalism*, 6.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 6–7.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 7.

The creation of these journals and newspapers in order to reach the larger population becomes nearly commonplace by 1967.

Along with the influence of literary journals and newspapers, by the early twentieth century, the Palestinian community had benefitted from education in Arabic, supported by their own intellectuals and missionaries who worked to promote this environment. The importance of this education is that despite the small scale upon which education was reformed, it had a lasting effect, primarily on the rich but also on some of the poor.<sup>57</sup> Tarif Khalidi vividly depicts the educational scene of the time and gives a strong sense of how this period contributed to the advancement of a Palestinian intellectual community and the overall formation of organised groups who worked against what they saw as not fitting with their ideologies. It is worth quoting him at length:

The colleges and schools of Cairo, Beirut and Istanbul attracted increasing numbers of Palestinian students, many of whom were to sharpen their sense of Arab nationalism in the intellectual ferment of foreign environments. Themes like Islamic reform, social Darwinism and secularism wove themselves into the fabric of their higher curricula, while in Palestine itself the native Arab Christians were fighting within their churches against foreign domination and the Arab Muslims were beginning to question the very foundation of their relationship to the Ottoman empire.<sup>58</sup>

Not only were Palestinians benefitting from education in their native tongue, increased education was leading more to higher-level study in other cities in the Arab world and in the

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<sup>57</sup> Khalidi, "Palestinian Historiography," 62.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 62–63.

broader Muslim world. All of this yielded an increased awareness and expression of opinions, regarding the governing forces in Palestine and Greater Syria.

Other Palestinian and Greater Syrian intellectuals were focusing on the growing presence of Zionism in the region and were working to educate as many as possible on this subject. Coming from diverse religious backgrounds, these intellectuals were, for the most part, also supporters of Arab nationalism. Tarif Khalidi describes how the increase of Jewish immigrants, of which a significant proportion were Zionists, “haunted the minds of an increasing number of Palestinian writers and journalists.”<sup>59</sup> Intellectuals who sought to educate others about Zionism worked in schools, educating pupils and reinforcing the importance of unity through their articles on this subject. Some even participated in Arab councils and helped to establish societies and clubs that worked against the establishment of a Zionist state and for Arab unity and, oftentimes, Arab independence.

Nagib ‘Azoury (c.1873–1916) was born in Beirut and later studied in Paris. He is an example of an intellectual who worked against Ottoman rule, yet was not entirely opposed to the presence of external powers in some areas of the Middle East. In Paris, he founded League de la patrie Arabe (Arab Fatherland League), a society that was opposed to Ottoman rule in Syria and Iraq.<sup>60</sup> Later, he founded *L’Indépendance arabe* (Arab Independence), through which he worked to gain support for freeing the Arabs from Ottoman control. This publication came to an end with the 1908 Ottoman constitution.<sup>61</sup> ‘Azoury was a strong supporter of Arab

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>60</sup> Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 98.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 99.

nationalism and was keenly aware of the goals of Zionism. In 1905, he published *Le Réveil de la nation Arabe* (The Awakening of the Arab Nation), in which he made the following conjecture:

Two important phenomena, of the same nature and yet opposed to each other, which have not yet attracted attention of anybody, are manifesting themselves at this moment in Asiatic Turkey: they are the awakening of the Arab nation and the hidden effort of the Jews to re-establish on a very grand scale the ancient monarch of Israel. These movements are destined to fight each other continually, until one of the two will win. On the final result of this struggle between these two peoples, representing two opposing principles, will depend the destiny of the whole world.<sup>62</sup>

Along with this chillingly prophetic statement, the term “awakening” is symbolic of this time period, not only in that it is representative of some of the events taking place within Arab communities, but also because it is a term widely used by the same intellectuals who were writing during this time period as well as documenting it. ‘Azoury’s work was far-reaching; his publication even caught the attention of members of the Zionist movement, prompting reviews from Aharon Hermoni (1882–1960) in *Hashiloah*, a “Hebrew literary and scientific monthly,” that at the time was somewhat critical of Theodor Herzl’s form of Zionism.<sup>63</sup> ‘Azoury was also aware of the imposing power of Muhammad Ali, and for that reason, he was not entirely against British rule in Egypt. To him, the British presence in Egypt was a means by which to prevent Egypt from conquering any other land.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Quoted in Stefan Wild, “Negib Azoury and His Book—Le Réveil de la Nation Arabe,” in *Intellectual life in the Arab East, 1890–1939*, ed. Marwan R. Buheiry (Beirut: Center for Arab and Middle East Studies, American University of Beirut, 1981), 97–98.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 102–103.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 98.

Al-Muntada al-Adabi (The Literary Forum) was established in 1909 in Constantinople “by a group of officials, deputies, men of letters and students, to serve as a meeting-place for Arab visitors and residents in the capital.”<sup>65</sup> While its goals were not overtly political, and in fact the Ottoman-led reformist movement, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) supported it, its committee actually worked to mediate between the CUP and the Arabs.<sup>66</sup> It also had branches in many places in Syria and Iraq.<sup>67</sup> The Arab Literary Club acted as an intellectual hub for Arabs from varying parts of the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, it gave them a space where “the traffic of ideas could move [freely].”<sup>68</sup> Another society working publicly was the Ottoman Decentralisation Party.<sup>69</sup> It pushed for the decentralising of the empire’s administration and sought to build support for this cause. It had branches in other areas of the empire, such as Syria and Iraq.<sup>70</sup> The Ottoman Decentralisation Party maintained contact with other Arab political groups in Syria and Iraq and with The Literary Club.<sup>71</sup> “In about a year, the committee of the Decentralisation Party had become the best-organised and most authoritative spokesman of Arab aspirations.”<sup>72</sup> Antonius recounts that it was this society that “provided its first essay in the science of organised effort” to battle Ottoman rule.<sup>73</sup>

While the majority of aforementioned societies worked publicly to foment Arab national ideas, al-Qahtaniya, was a secret society. It was “named after Qahtan, one of the legendary

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<sup>65</sup> Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 108.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Hizb al-Lāmarkazīyat al-Idārīyat al-‘Uthmānī.

<sup>70</sup> Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 109.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

ancestors of the Arab race,” and was established in 1909. Its objective was to turn the Ottoman Empire into a monarchy.<sup>74</sup> Led by Turkish army officer ‘Aziz ‘Ali al-Misri (1879–1965), the society’s members envisioned turning all of the Arab provinces into a kingdom that would be part of an Arab-Turko empire.<sup>75</sup> According to Antonius, al-Qahtaniya is important because of its attempt to gain the membership and support of Arab officers in the Ottoman army, in the hope of enjoining them to Arab nationalism.<sup>76</sup> Many of the members of this society were later hanged as a result of their involvement in Arab nationalist activities.<sup>77</sup>

Al-‘Ahd (The Covenant) was another group founded by al-Misri, with the backing of a group of officers in the Ottoman army. It was established in 1914, after al-Qahtaniya fell apart due to the existence of “an eaves-dropper” inside the society.<sup>78</sup> In some ways, it could be said that al-‘Ahd grew out of al-Qahtaniya. Al-‘Ahd’s goal was “autonomy for the Arabs within the empire.”<sup>79</sup> Its members worked in cooperation with the Damascus-based society, al-Fatat, and with King Faysal of Syria (later of Iraq), “to organize an armed revolt against Turkish rule.”<sup>80</sup>

Al-Fatat, established in Paris in 1911, later moved to Beirut and then Damascus. It was an important secret society, in part due to its influence on resistance party formation and activities in the Mandate period. The majority of its members were Muslim. It “called for the independence of all Arab lands and their liberation from any foreign domination.”<sup>81</sup> According

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 110.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 110. See asterisk to Footnote 2.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>79</sup> Abu-Ghazaleh, *Arab Cultural Nationalism*, 15.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 15.



to Antonius, this objective marked a shift from those of other societies, who had been calling for autonomy within the Ottoman Empire, rather than an end to it.<sup>82</sup> In 1913, al-Fatat helped to organise the First Arab Congress in Paris.<sup>83</sup> It was held on 18 June 1913, by the Beirut Committee of Reform “with emphasis on [the] Arab claim to full political rights.”<sup>84</sup> Although the Committee of Union and Progress worked to discredit the Congress, the Paris meeting was somewhat successful.<sup>85</sup> The Arabs were “granted...their points about regional military service, the use of Arabic as the official language of the Arab provinces, and its use as the medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools.”<sup>86</sup> According to Antonius, “no other society had played as determining a part in the history of the national movement.”<sup>87</sup> To him, what helped is that all seven leaders (all of whom were Muslim and Arab) were unified in their views. Such unity and such a firm stance towards Arab independence provided a model for political groups in the Mandate period, such as Istiqlal in Palestine. Many in al-Fatat were tried for treason, and one member was even killed for not revealing information about the society to Ottoman authorities.<sup>88</sup> ‘Abd al-Ghani al-‘Uraisi (1891–1916) was a prominent member of this society, and he was also the co-owner and co-editor of the journal *al-Mufid* (The Useful), alongside Fouad Hantas (d. 1914).<sup>89</sup> *Al-Mufid* is considered “one of the most prominent and consistent

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<sup>82</sup> Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 111.

<sup>83</sup> Rashid Khalidi, "The Press as a Source for Modern Arab Political History: 'Abd al-Ghani al-'Uraisi and al-Mufid," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (1981): 24.

<sup>84</sup> Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 115.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 111–12.

<sup>89</sup> Khalidi, "The Press as a Source for Modern Arab Political History," 24.

advocates of Arab nationalism, although it appears that the idea of full Arab independence had not yet taken root in the minds of al-‘Uraisi and his contemporaries.”<sup>90</sup>

### *The Impact on Palestinians*

Muhammad ‘Izzat Darwazah (1888–1984), a civil servant in the Ottoman Empire from Nablus, became a trustee member of Najah National College in Nablus in 1921.<sup>91</sup> Darwazah was remarkable in that he worked to instil in the younger generation a strong sense of Palestinian and Arab identity. We will find this quality in Anis Sayigh, who was dedicated to the promotion of research at the Palestine Research Center during the 1960s and 1970s. Darwazah’s work spans the entire time period that this chapter covers, and despite his membership in more elite Arab groups in the Mandate period, such as the Arab Executive—the primary political body that acted as the representative of the Palestinians to the British authorities—he remained tied to the intellectuals who were working towards popular resistance. The result of his efforts would soon come to fruition. “For the next seven years [from 1914 onwards] he tried to impress on his students and colleagues what he considered essential knowledge for all Palestinian Arabs: “the danger which the realization of Zionist plans would entail for their country.”<sup>92</sup> Darwazah actively engaged in political groups that worked against British rule as well as Zionism. Other intellectuals also involved themselves in the school system, as a means to educate others about what they believed to be an encroaching danger—Zionism. These efforts can be understood as a precursor to the types of efforts made between 1967 and 1974, to try to promote education on all topics related to the conflict.

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>91</sup> Abu-Ghazaleh, *Arab Cultural Nationalism*, 21.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

Qadri Tuqan (1911–1971), also from Nablus, worked at the Najah school and was active in broad efforts towards Palestinian unity and Arab unity, aside from his “main interest...[in] the history of science.”<sup>93</sup> After 1948, he worked to analyse “the origin of the Arab–Jewish conflict, stressing the clash of the two peoples’ nationalist aspirations” and wrote texts related to this topic, amongst others.<sup>94</sup> Muhammad Rafiq al-Tamimi (1890–1957) was from Nablus and later studied in France. He, along with Muhammad ‘Izzat Darwazah, “represented Nablus...in the Arab Congress held in Damascus in 1919.”<sup>95</sup> Al-Tamimi mainly focused on “educating his compatriots and strengthening their national consciousness through discussions.”<sup>96</sup> That such figures were limited in this way, perhaps speaks to the perceived role of intellectuals amongst which Palestinian intellectuals are, in large part, no exception. While some were more actively involved in revolts, most took up roles in which they helped to define and lay out the ideologies behind resistance, through writing, and by organising resistance groups and factions. Furthermore, this concept of national consciousness is one that is present in Fanon’s work on anti-colonial struggles and the work of intellectuals within such struggles, a discussion that will become particularly relevant in Chapter Three and Chapter Five.

The late Ottoman period, as well as the Mandate period, yielded to increased discontent from the Palestinian people as well as the other inhabitants of Greater Syria. Changing economic conditions, an increased urban population, and access to schooling by Western missionaries, for both Christian and Muslim Palestinians, as well as access to education abroad,

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 24.

contributed to the growth of a Palestinian intelligentsia. The end of the nineteenth century also saw economic growth in the region, particularly in the citrus industry. Cities became more populated, as migrants moved from the countryside.<sup>97</sup> The economic effect of such rural-to-urban migration became clear in Jaffa and Haifa, which were also the main entry points for Jewish migration, including many Zionists.<sup>98</sup> Given the increasing concern of Zionism as well as the growth of urban spaces and awareness of an Arab identity, Palestinian writers began to focus and write more on this subject. As Tarif Khalidi points out, “it is therefore not surprising that these two cities produced the three most influential newspapers in modern Palestinian history: *Filastin*, *al-Karmil*, and *al-Difa’*.”<sup>99</sup> Furthermore, Jerusalem was a crossroads in Palestine for diverse segments of society, as reflected by the classes present—feudal “lords”, peasants, the urban bourgeoisie, and factory workers. This milieu gave communist-leaning Palestinian intellectuals, such as Emile Habibi, impetus to spread their ideas and work towards class struggle.<sup>100</sup>

The increasing presence of Zionists within Palestine created concern that led to conversations around Arab nationalism and a flourishing of writing on Arab nationalism and Zionism. These early conversations impacted the nascent Palestinian Resistance of the time, and helped to spur the Palestinian Resistance that was to come. Furthermore, the 1908

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<sup>97</sup> See Khalidi, "Palestinian Historiography," 62; and Kimmerling and Migdal, *Palestinians*, 44–46.

<sup>98</sup> Khalidi, "Palestinian Historiography," 62.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Maher al-Sharif, *al-Shiyū'iyah wal-mas'alah al-qawmīyah al-'arabīyah fī Filastīn, 1919-1948: al-waṭanī wal-ṭabaqī fī al-thawrah al-taḥarrurīyah al-munāḥiḍah lil-imbiriyālīyah wal-ṣuḥyūnīyah* [Communism and the Arab National Question in Palestine, 1919–1948: Nation and Class in the Anti-war Revolution for Liberation from Zionist Imperialism] (Beirut: Markaz al-Abḥāth, Munazzamat al-Taḥrīr al-Filastīnīyah, 1981), 29–30.

revolution had eased restrictions on the press: “within a year, Arabs established 35 newspapers just in Syria, and between the revolution and the First World War more than 60 appeared in Beirut. Some of the papers, such as Beirut’s *al-Mufid*, challenged the CUP government’s centralising policies and particularly the perceived Turkification of public life.”<sup>101</sup>

### **Challenges to Arab Unity: The End of the Ottoman Empire, the Beginning of the Mandate**

The end of World War I saw the end of Ottoman control and brought about clearer, more defined control from the European powers. Before the war was over, the Sykes-Picot agreement between Britain and France had already divided the Middle East essentially into what best suited the interests of those two powers. Palestine became a British Mandate in 1920. Antonius explains that conflicts that began to take place in British and French Mandates were “provoked and made inevitable by the action of the European Powers” who worked “to carry out their self-appointed ‘tasks’ in Iraq, Syria and Palestine.”<sup>102</sup> A portion of Palestinian society—including notable families like the al-Husseini family and highly educated individuals like Antonius—worked with, and even for, the Mandate governing body. The cooperation of some, nonetheless, would not silence all. As anti-Mandate sentiment grew and, with it, popular political movements, so did the gap between Palestinian notable families and the “new” leadership. Furthermore, the growth of the Zionist movement and its Haganah militias would add to the tense and volatile climate of the Mandate and the region as a whole.

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<sup>101</sup>Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*, 14.

<sup>102</sup> Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, 350.

In February 1919, the leaders of al-Fatat had founded the Arab Istiqlal party. They had about 2500 members, “with perhaps 20,000 supporters.”<sup>103</sup> The party was unique in that, unlike the notable families who worked with Mandate authorities, Istiqlal took a strong stance against the colonial powers. While the party was supposed to unite and mobilise Syrians and Palestinians around Arab unity, “it was...perceived by many to be the [Syrian] government’s party, and it thus attracted to its ranks members who simply sought patronage and career opportunities.”<sup>104</sup> While al-Fatat was its own organisation, the Palestinian branch of it also participated in the anti-Zionist agendas of other clubs, societies, and organisations and identified the interests and efforts of Palestine with those of Greater Syria. One such club was al-Nadi al-Arabi (the Arab Club), “which foreign observers considered to be the leading public nationalist organisation in Damascus, and which also maintained branches in Palestine.”<sup>105</sup> The Arab Club, as well as Istiqlal, organised protests in Syria and Palestine to demand that King Faysal of Syria not yield to any French attempt to deny Syrian independence or its unity with Palestine.<sup>106</sup>

Antonius became disheartened by the British and their continued rule over Palestine, as well as their support of the Zionist cause.<sup>107</sup> The younger generation of Palestinians, who had been educated in schools in their native language, were particularly inflamed by the British presence and Zionist efforts. The Syrians, now living under French rule, also struggled for independence. The work of the intellectuals during the late Ottoman period became an

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<sup>103</sup> Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*, 25.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Silsby, "George Antonius," 88–91.

essential foundation of resistance ideology for those living under the Mandates. Popular uprisings saw the diminishing power of the Palestinian notables and the rise in power of the growing educated class, who in many ways had inherited the work of the intellectuals from the late Ottoman period. The events of this time, demonstrated the complexities and pitfalls of a pan-Arab resistance, the advantages of a resistance led by Palestinians, and the necessity for quick, united action against Zionism. These points came to be argued by the Palestinian Resistance, as well as by Arab leaders, for decades. As we will see, it is this type of realisation of his that can be connected to the sentiments of betrayal felt by the intellectuals at the end of the target research period towards certain figures and factions in the PLO that were not willing to direct the movement in what the leftists saw as the necessary, revolutionary way.

Often, the new leadership—comprising the younger and educated classes—accused the old leadership of not taking a strong enough stance against the British and their Mandate government. Such discrepancies arose out of the establishment of new political and social groups by the young leadership. These sentiments would also be expressed by certain members of the intellectuals during the end of the target research period. These groups, such as the Young Men’s Muslim Association (YMMA) and the Istiqlal party in Palestine, can be seen as a further evolution of the public and secret societies formed by their predecessors in the late Ottoman period. Among the members of these groups are counted some of the foremost intellectuals and leaders of Palestinian resistance of their time, such as Shaykh ‘Izz al-Din al-Qassam, the intellectual and resistance leader Hamdi al-Husseini (b. 1900; the head of the Gaza YMMA and later a leader in Palestine’s Istiqlal party), and Darwazah (although not one of the rising generation of intellectuals, Darwazah was a supporter of the new leadership’s causes).

## Political Games: Leadership Organisation and Re-organisation

With the leadership of the younger intellectuals, popular collective action rather than action based on an allegiance to heads of notable families became more heavily relied upon for political change. Hourani notes,

In the 1920's, and still more in the 1930's, there began to grow up a new sort of nationalism, more thoroughgoing than that of the older generation. It was not satisfied with the old methods of organization and action: the loose shifting associations of local notables, knowing each other well, often related to each other, accustomed to work together but each with his local following and not prepared to subordinate himself to others.<sup>108</sup>

This trend continued up to the period with which this thesis is concerned. In other words, one could say that the intellectuals of the 1967–1974 period, are direct descendants—in terms of many ideological points such as Arab nationalism and popular resistance—of the intellectuals active during the Mandate period. While certain notable Palestinian families had been the intermediaries of the governing powers and the Palestinian people, the growth of education helped to shrink the gap between the notables and others. This, of course, was a slow process, and socio-economic gaps did not entirely disappear. Yet as the history of the Palestinian resistance progressed, one finds a decline in the power of notable families and an increase in the influence of others, who are not necessarily of little means, but who have not been born

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<sup>108</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939*, 307.



into a family with connections to governing powers. This becomes a defining feature of the types of intellectuals who play key roles in resistance from 1967 to 1974. This increased power was visible, not only due the development of education, but also because of the growth of popular revolts during the Mandate period.

With the societies of the late Ottoman period understood as a precursor to the factions seen from 1967 to 1974, and the presence of Arab nationalist “education” given by educators such as Darwazah, groups that would push for independence and Arab unity began to form in the region, such as in Iraq, the French Mandate of Syria, and the British Mandate of Palestine.<sup>109</sup> Iraq and the French Mandate of Syria, in particular, are seen as centres of Arab nationalist activities. Hourani speaks of Syria as a place that is symbolic of Arab nationalism and Iraq as a place of more “active” Arab nationalism. He points out that Iraq had “relative independence” before Syria did, and that there was cooperation “between the aspirations of the national groups and the ambitions of the Hashimite family.”<sup>110</sup> Nonetheless, in both countries, as well as in the Mandate of Palestine, groups, congresses, and conferences that worked for Arab independence, began to form. Those involved in cultivating Arab unity as well as organising activities against the European powers, during this time, included many intellectuals. Given the closeness of Syria and Palestine, in both heritage and geographic proximity, activities and figures in these two countries will be the focus of this section of the chapter.

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 307–09.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 294–95.

Initial attempts at working towards independence during the Mandate period included the Syrian-Palestinian Congress, formed, in 1920, by Syrian and Palestinian intellectuals such as Rashid Rida (1865–1935). Rida was an important figure in the articulation of the role of Islam in Arab nationalism, an idea which he spread in his publication *al-Manar* (The Lighthouse) (1898–1935).<sup>111</sup> The extent to which this attempt to work towards independence was, in fact, supported by all members of the Congress, is questionable. Members of the Congress belonged to the intellectual and politically elite classes of the time and had significant links to European powers.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, the Palestinians withdrew from the Congress in 1922, citing a lack of attention to Palestinian affairs.<sup>113</sup> Internal political groups and congresses then became the primary means to combat the Mandate authority, as well as the growing threat of Zionism. Such a shift is an interesting parallel to the change in method and leadership in 1967 and the years leading up to it, which will be discussed in Chapter Two. What became apparent in the middle and latter years of the Mandate period was a strong effort by the younger Palestinian leadership, such as Hamdi al-Husseini and those involved in the YMMA, to seek popular support in the fight for independence and to combat Zionism, while maintaining a strict distance from the British and, by consequence, from the older Palestinian leadership and notable families. With unsuccessful attempts to organise themselves, the notable families and the British were establishing their own councils and leadership structures. These power struggles were similar to the types of power struggles that seemed to overwhelm popular resistance efforts from 1967

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<sup>111</sup> Philip S. Khoury, "Factionalism among Syrian Nationalists during the French Mandate," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 13, no. 4 (1981): 448.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 447.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, 444.

to 1974. As we will see, armed struggle and what were the necessary political and ideological steps to take all became points of debate and areas for competition.

Between 1918 and 1923, Palestinian leaders held congresses in order to plan strategies and develop a common call for Palestinian independence and resistance to Zionism.<sup>114</sup> In 1920, the third Palestinian Arab Congress agreed to be separated from northern Syria. At this same Congress, a permanent body consisting of nine members was elected to represent Palestinian national interests to the British government, with Musa Kazim al-Husseini (1853–1934), of the notable Jerusalem al-Husseini family, as its president.<sup>115</sup> The Congress never received official recognition from the British, at least in part due to the British preference for dividing, rather than uniting, Palestinians.<sup>116</sup> Weldon Matthews asserts that, “it is an indication of the success of this policy in undercutting a coherent national movement, that at the sixth congress in 1923, the factional infighting was intense enough to prevent the convening of a national congress for another five years.”<sup>117</sup> We can understand this time as representing an early form of factionalism, a phenomenon that would plague the resistance from 1967 to 1974. The British further sought ways to maintain control and divide the Palestinian population. The addition of legislative bodies, which were sect-specific and led by Palestinian elite families, helped in this regard. The need for anti-colonial resistance thus becomes clear even in this early period.

The British set out to establish relations with the Palestinian notable families on their own terms, and in large part, the notable families agreed to do so. Perhaps the most prominent

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<sup>114</sup> Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*, 34.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

of these families was the al-Husseini family, who had occupied many important political posts in Jerusalem.<sup>118</sup> Following the death of the mufti of Jerusalem, Kamil al-Husseini (b. 1867), in 1921, the British appointed his younger half-brother Hajj Amin al-Husseini (c.1897–1974) as mufti.<sup>119</sup> Amin al-Husseini had “expressed his desire [to the British High Commissioner in meetings in 1921] for good relations with the government and his willingness to see that the disturbances of 1920 (for which he had been prosecuted and later pardoned) would not be repeated.”<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, when the British established the Supreme Muslim Council (SMC) in 1921, it was not unexpected that Amin al-Husseini would be elected as its president. This allowed the British to maintain close ties with, and perhaps even control, a figure of a notable family who had been a Palestinian nationalist activist.<sup>121</sup> The SMC’s role was to handle Islamic affairs (for example, trusts and Islamic courts) so that the British could avoid any “disruptive interference in Muslim civic and religious affairs.”<sup>122</sup> Its underlying purpose perhaps went even deeper, as it was a means by which the British could further sectarian divisions and stifle efforts towards popular, cross-sectarian nationalism.<sup>123</sup> That such cooperation with the Mandate authority was frustrating to many Palestinian intellectuals—who were working for total independence—is no surprise. According to Matthews, Amin al-Husseini “used his position to promote himself as a Palestinian leader by appointing his supporters and family to positions in

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 30–31.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

the SMC's administrative machinery."<sup>124</sup> While the SMC worked towards its goals, another form of leadership was beginning to bloom.

The 1925–1927 Syrian Revolt against the French Mandate authority, although not entirely successful, was an important learning experience for Arab resistance against colonial powers. It provided the Syrians and their neighbours with new ideas regarding resistance and the gleam, however real or imagined, of the glories of Arab nationalism.<sup>125</sup> As Philip Khoury explains: "simply put, in the 1920s there was more political activity of the kind that aroused pan-Arab sentiments in Syria than in Palestine."<sup>126</sup> While many historians call this revolt a prime example of Arab nationalism at play, there exists the view that this "romantic" view of the uprising bears little resemblance to what was actually being carried out on the ground and that the French were the winners of the revolt.<sup>127</sup> Interestingly, this criticism is also present within the arguments of critics of the work of the left during 1967–1974. To historian Joyce Lavery Miller, the nationalist element of the Syrian Revolt was primarily in name, and overall the efforts of those involved were not fruitful "because of its local, rather than national, objectives, its lack of strong leadership and ideology, and its failure to develop internal coherence."<sup>128</sup> Such a criticism will also come to bear heavily on the efforts of the resistance from 1967 to 1974. Miller's one concession is that the revolt did influence and inspire ideas for resistance throughout the Mandate. She adds that the revolt's nationalist elements were actually more

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>125</sup> Joyce Lavery Miller, "The Syrian Revolt of 1925," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 8, no. 4 (1977): 549–50.

<sup>126</sup> Philip S. Khoury, "Divided Loyalties? Syria and the Question of Palestine, 1919–39," *Middle Eastern Studies* 21, no. 3 (1985): 327.

<sup>127</sup> See Miller, "The Syrian Revolt," 549.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

keenly felt outside of Syria.<sup>129</sup> During this time as well, Syrians also spoke out against the British Mandate of Palestine, criticising Zionist activity and British rule in the press, such as in the Damascus newspaper *Alif Ba* (A B), run by Palestinian Yusuf al-'Issa (1870–1948).<sup>130</sup> The Syrian-Palestinian Congress that existed throughout the 1920s is another example of the pan-Arab efforts of the two groups.

### **Road to Popular Struggle**

In discussing early efforts at popular struggle, we find that many of the demands of these movements remain present in the 1967–1974 period. The YMMA was first established in Egypt in 1926 as an organisation that would help to uphold the Islamic values and education of Muslim men. It began in Palestine in 1928, with the same purpose and the added pressure of the spread of European and Christian influences in the region.<sup>131</sup> While the Palestinian YMMA's charter claimed to be apolitical, its activities would prove counter to this statement. A large number of civil servants and intellectuals joined the YMMA in Palestine, which had spread quickly to various cities in the Mandate.<sup>132</sup> Over time, the Arab nationalist views of those within the organisation began to take shape and be heard. Hamdi al-Husseini, who helped to lead the Gaza branch, also developed these views through the newspaper *Sawt al-Haq* (The Voice of Truth) in December of 1928.<sup>133</sup> The paper focused on the rights of Palestinian workers, Britain's expressed support of a Jewish homeland in Palestine as stated in the Balfour Declaration of

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 549–50.

<sup>130</sup> Khoury, "Divided Loyalties? Syria and the Question of Palestine, 1919–39," 326.

<sup>131</sup> Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*, 56.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 58.

1917, and “the lack of representative government, oppressive taxation, lack of protection for local industry, insufficient schools and a poor police force.”<sup>134</sup> Here we find an example of an early attempt to emphasise the importance of class within resistance struggle, something that many of the leftist intellectuals and factions of the PLO later worked, with varying degrees of success, to include in their ideologies. Such complaints demonstrate the early days of suppression felt by Palestinians as well as the inclusion of class in resistance struggles. YMMA members also called for popular action in tackling their concerns, such as through organising workers’ unions. The efforts of the YMMA and Hamdi al-Husseini, caught the attention of the League to Combat Imperialism in Europe. Al-Husseini began to work with the League in order to help coordinate a congress for them. He also met with Comintern leaders such as Joseph Stalin, as a result of which the British put al-Husseini under surveillance. As a result, the civil servants affiliated with the YMMA became nervous, and the YMMA branch in Jaffa worked to dissociate itself from al-Husseini.<sup>135</sup> Such political hopscotch would become characteristic of the 1960s and 1970s as well, in which efforts at popular struggle were never straight forward and political alliances became increasingly difficult to navigate.

In a 1929 issue of *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* (The Straight Path), an article entitled “Troublemakers and Extremism,” stated that the older leadership were responsible for hindering the success of the YMMA’s resistance struggle. This shunning of the older leadership by the new, nationalist leadership, “came to the fore at the first Arab students’ congress” in the same year, in Jaffa.<sup>136</sup> Hamdi al-Husseini was also present at the congress, and spoke against

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 62.

the Mandate authority's pro-Zionist policies. The congress agreed to, "direct a call to the Arab nation (ummah), drawing its attention to its obligations in these serious circumstances, urging it to demand complete independence on the basis of Arab unity and support Palestine's demands for independence."<sup>137</sup> The 1929 Wailing Wall riots occurred just after the congress.<sup>138</sup>

The Wailing Wall riots have been described as, "the largest popular manifestation of Syrian support for the Palestinian cause [that] came at the tail end of the decade when the lull in Palestine was finally shattered by Arab riots against Jews."<sup>139</sup> Tension between Jewish communities, the Zionists in particular, and the Arab Palestinians, Muslims in particular, flared, culminating in riots surrounding concern over the methods of Jewish prayer at the Western Wall and whether those methods were simply efforts to gain ownership over the area.<sup>140</sup> Riots took place all over the Mandate, and "in all, the government reported 133 Jews and 116 Arabs dead, the latter including seven victims of Jewish murderers in addition to casualties from the suppression of the riots."<sup>141</sup> What angered the Palestinians was that the British only condemned the murder of Jews by Arabs. The YMMA and the Arab Executive worked together to give the government an ultimatum of changes in their policies or a general strike, but the Executive's decision to cancel this call angered the YMMA. Despite the Executive's efforts, the strike occurred in October of 1929. The YMMA also called for a boycott of foreign and Zionist-made goods.<sup>142</sup> The British responded with force and arrests, including arresting Hamdi al-

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Khoury, "Divided Loyalties?" 327.

<sup>140</sup> Alex Winder, "The 'Western Wall' Riots of 1929: Religious Boundaries and Communal Violence," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 42, no. 1 (2012): 12–13.

<sup>141</sup> Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*, 64.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 65.



Husseini and alleging that he was motivated by a religiously-inspired anti-Judaism. Al-Husseini's response, in *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, was a firm rebuttal,

The most detailed was a front-page editorial in *al-Sirat al-mustaqim* asserting that he was not a communist but a principled nationalist who had consistently opposed "the Buraqists", never associated with the SMC and insisted Palestinians focus their struggle on British imperialism. The paper further claimed that "The government wants to show all the world that the question of Palestine is a sectarian...issue, every participant in the struggle is a sectarian, and that there is no one in the country who deviates from support for this concept of struggle."<sup>143</sup>

Such strong, frustrated statements would near ubiquity from 1967 to 1974, when calls for Arab unity and, more profoundly, for Palestinian unity, would be made by the writers and editors of newspapers, journals, and magazines associated with the Palestinian resistance.

From the end of 1929 and into 1930, the British began to close the branches of the YMMA.<sup>144</sup> With frustrations high, Nablus schoolteacher Akram Zu'aytir (1909–1996), who had attended the Najah school, looked for a solution. He proceeded Ahmed al-Shuqeiry as the editor of the Jerusalem newspaper *Mir'at al-Sharq* (The Mirror of the East). In it, he wrote the article "Istiqlalists," in which he stated the necessity of independence from the British and declared that the success of Zionism lay with the British and their support of this cause.<sup>145</sup> Zu'aytir was inspired by the activities of Ghandi, which were occurring simultaneously, and he called on students to organise similar forms of protest in Palestine. Zu'aytir also urged the Arab

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 66–67.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 69.

Executive, then travelling to British after the British report on the 1929 Wailing Wall incident, to demand complete independence for Palestine. Zu'aytir and his ideas grew in popularity and he was arrested by the British in 1930.<sup>146</sup>

The power struggles occurring within the Palestinian resistance at this time were substantial. Zu'aytir and his followers were doubtful that the Arab Executive would take a strong stance against the British. A friend of Zu'aytir's, Wasif Kamil, wrote in a letter to Zu'aytir: "[We must avoid] confrontation with them until the day comes when the youth can seize the reins of the national movement, relying on the support of the people."<sup>147</sup> Zu'aytir continued to work to organise the students and to emphasise the importance of Palestinian unity and independence over gaining government jobs.<sup>148</sup> As we will see, the types of power struggles between "old" and "new" leadership and overall disunity of the Palestinian community at this time, is an element of the resistance that was also present in the 1967–1974 period, especially towards the end of this period, when a conflict with the Jordanian kingdom threatened the stability and strength of the resistance. As the Arab Executive remained weak in their stance against the British, the Arab press increased their focus on the desire for a popular political party whose main platform would be Palestinian nationalism and independence.<sup>149</sup>

The British White Paper of 1930 and, more specifically, the Arab Executive's lack of a strong response to it, was yet another catalyst for the young leadership to look for alternative means of resistance. Amongst other issues, the White Paper outlined limits to land sales to the

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 69–70.

<sup>147</sup> Cited in Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*, 71.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 72.

Jews in Palestine as well as immigration quotas. Despite what seemed like a stronger stance against Zionist action in Palestine, the words of the paper were soon softened. While the Arab Executive was silent, the Zionist leadership expressed their anger to the British, to which they responded, in the MacDonald Letter of 1931, that they were still “committed” to settling the Jews in Palestine.<sup>150</sup> Protests over the events and the Arab Executive’s lack of response began in Palestine with former members of Syria’s Istiqlal party, Zu’aytir, Darwazah (who was also a member of the Arab Executive), and groups such as the Islamic Society in Haifa.<sup>151</sup> The Jerusalem Congress of December 1931 also dealt with the abolition of the caliphate. Amin al-Husseini, however, to boost his image in the Palestinian Muslim community and to promote the Palestinian cause to the Islamic world. In doing so, he would also improve ties with the British.<sup>152</sup> “The sense of crisis that pervaded politically aware elements of the population provoked questions about practical strategies for protecting Palestine from colonisation as well as related questions about the nature of Palestinian political identity.”<sup>153</sup> There was renewed growth of Syrian and Palestinian unity among activists and protesters, who called for broader Arab unity, while *al-Sirat al-Mustaqim* also reflected this call.<sup>154</sup> Darwazah resigned from the Arab Executive around this time.<sup>155</sup> Darwazah was likely disillusioned with its inaction. One can draw a parallel between the increased momentum of the young leadership at this point and the swift organisation of the Palestinian resistance in 1967, when Palestinians had reached another

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 82–83.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 85–86.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 86.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 86–87.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 89.

peak in their frustrations at the lack in steps towards positive change being taken by the resistance. In 1967 this seemed to be due not only to Israeli strength, but to Arab weakness in rallying early enough and strongly enough against an imminent threat. Anger would also ensue towards the end of the period, as a more purely diplomatic path was forged by the more powerful elements of the PLO, namely Fatah.

### **The Growth of Zionism and the 1936–1939 Revolt**

The Istiqlal party in Palestine, which was officially established in Palestine in 1932, has been credited with “binding the question of British control of the county to the more narrowly defined challenge of Zionism.”<sup>156</sup> While the party was short-lived, largely due to the efforts to weaken it by the older leadership, it was unique in that it worked to mobilise not just intellectuals, but also the general Palestinian public.<sup>157</sup> Within these earlier efforts are the beginnings of what can be described as attempts to build an anti-colonial movement.

Membership, however, was limited, as the group saw itself as a “vanguard organization,” and had a membership of about thirty to sixty individuals.<sup>158</sup> The group was pan-Arab and had three main principles: “(a) the complete independence of the Arab lands, (b) the Arab lands are a complete and indivisible unit, (c) Palestine is an Arab country and a natural part of Syria.”<sup>159</sup> The group also recognised Palestine as its own political entity and worked to abolish the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate.<sup>160</sup> The strong stance of the party and the populist element,

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 137, 234.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 138.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

suggest similarity to groups such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, established in 1967.

### *Growing Concerns*

Between 1935 and 1943, 214,710 Jews migrated to Palestine, fleeing from Nazism.<sup>161</sup> The Zionist calls for a Jewish homeland in Palestine—which began in the late-nineteenth century and had already begun to pull immigrants from Europe to Palestine—was growing in support. As the number of Zionist immigrants rose in Palestine, so did tensions between Arabs and Jews. Economic concerns also grew. In order to establish their homeland, Zionists worked to establish the appropriate economic conditions for a Jewish State, seeking to own land, factories, and other businesses. By 1935, 872 factories were controlled by Jews in Palestine. There was also a decrease in the number of Palestinian workers on Jewish land.<sup>162</sup>

The work of the young leadership, the Istiqlalists included, as well as important economic downturns for Palestinian Arabs, acted as a catalyst for the 1936–1939 revolt. On top of this, news of the Haganah’s purchase of weapons from Europe shocked the Palestinian public and created further impetus for, not just protest but armed action.<sup>163</sup> The general strikes during this period were intended as a call for nationalism, unity against the British, and the halting of Jewish immigration.<sup>164</sup> Unions across the Mandate worked together to have their demands met. By 1937, students, with the help of their instructors, had also established the Arab

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<sup>161</sup> Kanafani, *Thawrat 36–39 fī Filasṭīn*, 8.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 9. For information of the work of Zionist militias during this time, who also sought the elimination of Palestinians from Palestine, see Ilan Pappé’s seminal text, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2006).

<sup>163</sup> Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*, 237.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 252.

Student's Union.<sup>165</sup> Unions and political groups with socialist or communist leanings and a sense of Palestinian nationalism continued to grow from the mid-1930s and into the 1940s. The strikes, and the intervention of Arab leaders from Iraq and Transjordan, were effective: in exchange for the British conducting a commission of inquiry into the growing tensions between Jewish and Palestinian Arab communities living in the Mandate, the strike ceased.<sup>166</sup> The 1937 Peel Commission determined that the irreconcilable differences between the Palestinians and the Zionists should result in a partitioning of the area.<sup>167</sup> The revolt, as well as the growth and success of Zionism, also stimulated Palestinian participation in the type of resistance groups that were active during the 1936-1939 strikes.<sup>168</sup> By the early 1940s, intellectuals, including communist Emile Habibi (1922–1996), formed clubs based on their political leanings. One such club, *Shu'aa al-Amal* (Ray of Hope), was an intermediary between student groups and groups comprising workers in oil and petroleum factories.<sup>169</sup> The League Combating Fascism in Palestine also developed during this time, and among its members were Palestinian intellectuals Emile Touma (1918–1985) and Tawfiq Toubi (1922–2011).<sup>170</sup> In 1942, the League dissolved and became the Federation of Trade Unions and Collective of Arab Workers.<sup>171</sup> In 1943, the Palestinian Communist Party, that had been established in 1924, in large part broke down, with the Jewish members remaining and Arabs leaving. According to Marxist historian Maher al-Sharif, it was not simply anti-Jewish sentiment that led to the breakdown. He

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<sup>165</sup> al-Sharif, *al-Shiyū'īyah wal-mas'alah al-qawmīyah al-'arabīyah fī Filasṭīn*, 107–08.

<sup>166</sup> Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*, 256.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.

<sup>168</sup> al-Sharif, *al-Shiyū'īyah wal-mas'alah al-qawmīyah al-'arabīyah fī Filasṭīn*, 107–109.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

describes that in the years of World War II, Arab society developed culturally, socially, and politically, perhaps making the Palestinian Communist Party somewhat obsolete for Palestinian Arabs.<sup>172</sup> The changes in Palestinian society thus contributed to the emergence of new political groups that arguably better-suited the new realities in Palestine. These evolutions marked the growth of leftist political leanings amongst popular groups and intellectuals throughout Palestine, growth that would continue throughout 1967–1974.

In 1943 the Palestinian National Liberation League formed in Haifa out of members of the Conglomeration of Arab Intellectuals and the Federation of Trade Unions and Collective of Arab Workers, most of whose members were Arab communists, though this group did not immediately label themselves as communists. Communism, Sharif argues, was more of a natural progression of the group and their work, and they began with broad, leftist ideologies.<sup>173</sup> In 1944, they published their first official paper with articles stating their stances on issues in and outside of Palestine.<sup>174</sup> The Federation of Trade Unions and Collective of Arab Workers became an important centre for the dissemination of ideology as well as for the production, which began in 1944, of *al-Ittihad* (The Union) newspaper.<sup>175</sup> In 1945, this federation worked with other leftist trade unions to hold the Conference of Arab Workers in Palestine, which connected more than 20,000 Arab workers in Palestine.<sup>176</sup> The work of both the intellectuals and popular groups at this time was remarkable, as it demonstrated the importance of an ideological framework to which Palestinians could adhere. Furthermore, it

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 106–107.

<sup>173</sup> al-Sharif, *al-Shuyū'iyah wal-mas'alah al-qawmīyah al-'arabīyah fī Filasṭīn*, 106.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 109.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

demonstrated the growth of both Palestinian nationalism and Arab unity, as means for resistance against imperialism and Zionism.

Arab Palestinian workers, students, and intellectuals united in the 1930s, not just in calling for the rights of workers, but also to face the growing presence of Zionism within the economy and society in general. For Arab workers, unification was a means to resist and suppress the growth of industries being propelled by Zionist groups. Kanafani discusses the early economic achievements of Zionism as steps towards a capitalist society in Palestine.<sup>177</sup> Thus, a class-based struggle, with the help of the intellectuals, was seen by many as the way forward. Later, with the development of guerrilla groups throughout the world, such as the Viet Cong in South Vietnam and Cambodia, the Front de Libération National (FLN) in Algeria, and Fidel Castro's 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement, in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, unity through shared experiences of colonialism and imperialism, not just class struggle, would become relevant to Palestinian and Arab resistance. This will be discussed further in Chapter Two. At the same time, however, as we will see in the chapters to come, there were also individuals who used the rhetoric of class-based resistance as a driving force for their vision of Palestinian and Arab resistance.

### **Statehood and the Reaction of Palestinian Intellectuals**

The Bludan Conference in 1937 helped to lay out the necessary steps for Arab independence from European rule and subsequently for Arab unity.<sup>178</sup> Bludan was a response to the growth of

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<sup>177</sup> Kanafani, *Thawrat* 36–39 fī Filasṭīn, 8.

<sup>178</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 293.



protests in Palestine, as well as the Peel Commission's suggestion of partitioning Palestine.<sup>179</sup>

Amin al-Husseini, who rejected the Peel Commission's plan, organised the unofficial Bludan Conference. Attendees included prominent Arab politicians and intellectuals, such as Abdullah al-Yafi and Riad al-Solh.<sup>180</sup> While the meeting was unofficial, the Arab politicians, religious leaders, and intellectuals who attended made headway in defining the shared goals of the Arabs, including goals and strategies in regards to the fragile situation in Palestine. These included: boycotting Jewish businesses, not selling land to Jews, and opposition to the division of Palestine. They also decided on points labelled as "propaganda" by the British, such as printing information about the Palestinian struggle and creating a "propaganda office," with branches in the Arab countries as well as Geneva and London.<sup>181</sup> Hourani calls this conference "the most important" that took place amongst the Arabs in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>182</sup> These types of efforts to combat the threats of Zionism can also be seen in the conferences held during the target research period, such as the Khartoum Summit in 1967.<sup>183</sup> Finally, in the White Paper of 1939, the British limited Jewish immigration and planned to create an independent Palestinian state "in no more than ten years."<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Elie Kedourie, "The Bludan Congress on Palestine, September 1937," *Middle Eastern Studies* 17, no. 1 (1981): 107.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 107–108.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

<sup>182</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939*, 292.

<sup>183</sup> Matthews, *Confronting an Empire*, 256. Also part of the British plan, was to arrest Amin al-Husseini, in order to make room for Amir Abdullah, who would essentially replace al-Husseini's role as intermediary. Al-Husseini soon fled to Lebanon. This demonstrates the loosening power that the traditional families had in the face of governing forces, giving more reason for younger generations to seek different ways of resistance.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

Within nine years' time, the British Mandate would end and the Zionists would achieve their goal of creating a state. The 1948 war and the *nakba* caused the Palestinian leader Musa al-'Alami (1897–1974) to write *'Ibrat Filastin* (The Lesson of Palestine). In it, he discussed his misgivings regarding Palestine, its future and current state. He lamented the lack of unity of Arabs, as well as their lack of preparation and execution in the war, and “above all the absence of political consciousness among the people and of contact between them and the government.”<sup>185</sup> He also put forward ideas for strengthening the Arabs, including a reformed government that would run efficiently and look out for the welfare of people via social services, freedoms, and work.<sup>186</sup> In the context of the intellectuals of 1967–1974, al-'Alami's book, in its response to the 1948 war, bears similarities with Sadik al-Azm's response to the 1967 war, with an explanation of the mistakes of the Arab people in preventing and responding to such a crisis. This discussion will continue throughout the thesis, particularly in Chapters Two and Five.

Who would bring forth these aforementioned changes? Hourani explains that both al-'Alami and Syrian intellectual and Arab nationalist Constantine Zurayk (1909–2000) placed their faith in the elite to work to undertake such changes and create a national ideological framework that would be the foundation for change.<sup>187</sup> This is an interesting point, in terms of the evolution of Palestinian resistance, as the efforts of the intellectuals in this early period already yielded to the growth of political parties and popular efforts for resistance. The years to come would demonstrate a further growth of an educated class, that would work to mobilise their peers, and Palestinians in general, to resist. Fayez Sayigh, also noted that in order to bring

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<sup>185</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, 355.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

about unity, there must be a social, not just political, change in the fabric of Arab society.<sup>188</sup>

Historian 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Duri saw Arab history as a series of popular movements with the goal of liberation and unity.<sup>189</sup> Questions always arose, however, in determining on what bases people should unite. This view—of social and political change—was one held by many intellectuals of the late Ottoman period and the Mandate period, and it was also one of the primary reasons for the creation of so many political factions by Palestinian and Arab intellectuals during the period of 1967 to 1974.

### **1948: Reactions to the Nakba**

Zurayk writes in his text *The Meaning of Disaster*, that the *nakba* is “a disaster in every sense of the word...one of the harshest of the trials and tribulations with which the Arabs have been afflicted throughout their long history.”<sup>190</sup> He proceeds to mark in detail how the Arabs failed to defeat the Zionists. Zurayk wrote this text in the same year that the *nakba* occurred, and it stands as a call for Arab unity as well as a call for all Arabs to make the Palestinian problem the priority in Arab affairs. His tone, not of despair but of disgrace, bears a striking resemblance to that of al-Azm's when al-Azm discusses the 1967 defeat. Moreover, like al-Azm, Zurayk emphasises, through reprimands and reminders, that Arab unity is essential.<sup>191</sup> George Habash

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 355–56.

<sup>190</sup> Constantine Zurayk, *The Meaning of The Disaster*, trans. R. Bayly Wilder (Beirut: Khayat's College Book Cooperative, 1956), 2.

<sup>191</sup> Another useful reference about Zurayk is 'Azīz al-'Azmah, *Zurayq: Qusṭantīn Zurayq: 'Arabī lil-Qarn al-'Ashrīn* [Zurayk: Constantine Zurayk: An Arab for the Twentieth Century] (Beirut: Institute of Palestine Studies, 2003).

says of Zurayk that he, along with Sati' al-Husri, are "the most prominent nationalist thinkers who influenced us [Habash and those who established the Arab Nationalist Movement]." <sup>192</sup> It is telling that the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) would start three years later.

Despite his emphasis on Arab nationalism, Zurayk's vision for resistance has strong parallels to the makeup of the Palestinian Resistance from 1967 to 1974. Zurayk describes how, "One view of the history of the various awakenings in the world demonstrates most clearly that a bringing together of the forces of these struggling elites within party organizations and the like is the greatest factor in creating the awakening and transforming the situation." <sup>193</sup> Furthermore, to Zurayk, it was the intellectuals who would be the ones capable of leading a strong resistance movement. They would also "produce those individuals who build states, create nations, and make history." <sup>194</sup> Lastly, Zurayk emphasises that there must be a united resistance with a single goal. <sup>195</sup> Such ideas were at the heart of the PLO, yet the ideologies of the factions, as well as the motivations of various Arab statesmen, tended to differ.

For the resistance, 1967 came to be considered another period of "awakening." Furthermore, the many parallels between 1967 and the 1836–1948 time period discussed in this chapter, allows us to more clearly identify what is distinct about the ideological shifts of 1967–1974. Hourani points out that, "Since 1967, many Arab intellectuals have shifted from

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<sup>192</sup> Ghassan Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad: Wadī'a Ḥaddād, Kārlūs, Anīs al-Naqqāsh, Jūrj Ḥabash* [Secrets of the Black Box: Wadie Haddad, Carlos, Anis al-Naqqash, George Habash] (Beirut: Riad el-Rayyes Books, 2008), 350.

<sup>193</sup> Zurayk, *The Meaning of The Disaster*, 44.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 46.

viewing the past as a socioeconomic stage to be overcome and contested, to adopting a pathological framework to the Arab condition.”<sup>196</sup> Weiss and Hensson separate 1967 from earlier periods, emphasising the stark change in strategy that came about during this period. We can see such discussions of the Arab condition in, for example, the work of al-Azm, to be discussed in the following chapter. While some worked to show to the general public what was “wrong” with Arab society, others simply worked towards a more general goal of “Palestinian liberation.” The conflict that ensued between these two approaches will become clearer with each successive chapter of this thesis.

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<sup>196</sup> Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age*, xviii.

## Chapter Two:

### The Palestinian Resistance, 1948–1967—Ideas for Resistance Brewing

Following the catastrophic events—the *nakba*—of 1948, as well as the reaction of members of the Arab intellectual community to these events, those newly involving themselves in resistance were prepared to cast aside the tactics of the old-guard families—those notables who had maintained close ties with the colonising forces in the region, in order to hold on to power—and to move away from a heavy reliance on Arab regimes and their militaries, due to the defeats in 1948 and 1967. Furthermore, as we will see, Arab unity, and Arab nationalism in particular, was subject to suspicion after the 1967 defeat.

The political structures discussed in Chapter One were what the younger generation had hoped to break down. Families like the Husseinis and Nashashibis ultimately represented a higher class and, perhaps in part for this reason, were unable to foster the type of mass resistance movement that would liberate Palestine. Palestinian nationalism, nonetheless was a product of this “Arab social environment,” with its “pyramidal family and clan network.”<sup>1</sup> Because of this, Ann Lesch notes that the movement “had great endurance” in part because this structure allowed for “rapid articulation and of opinion and mobilization of all levels of society.”<sup>2</sup> At the same time, “this structure made it difficult to unify the national movement. Since each leading family had a political power base in client villages or town-quarters, it felt

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<sup>1</sup> Ann Mosely Lesch, “The Palestine Arab Nationalist Movement under the Mandate,” in *The Politics of Palestinian Nationalism*, ed. William B. Quandt, Paul Jabber, and Ann Mosely Lesch (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 17.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

itself equal of the others and bargained vigorously before forming alliances.”<sup>3</sup> This problem of unity was one that, Arab nationalists had hoped to surmount. As we will see, when this appeared to fail, Palestinian nationalism became increasingly popular. At the same time, as will be discussed further in the upcoming chapters, particularly in Chapter Three, for many leftist intellectuals, Palestinian nationalism was part of a larger liberation movement for the region. It was through Palestinian nationalism that those fighting for resistance would get closer to Arab liberation.

The focus of Palestinian resistance, had to be aligned with the rising political movements of the time, as well as with the reality of the newly formed Israeli state and the worsening position of Palestinians, many of whom now lived in refugee camps. The growing strength of the Israeli military added further impetus for adopting guerrilla tactics, in order to have a chance at facing the Israeli military on anything approaching a level playing field.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the perception that, to all Arabs, the 1967 war came as a surprise, there were some who knew that this war had been in the making for some time.<sup>5</sup> More importantly, to

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Chamberlin, "The Struggle Against Oppression Everywhere: The Global Politics of Palestinian Liberation," *Middle Eastern Studies* 47, no. 1 (2011): 31.

<sup>5</sup> There is some degree of controversy to the assertion that the Israeli government made an offensive attack. The Israeli government has argued that the war was, on their part, a defensive move. There is, however, evidence, including declassified CIA analyses of the war, that suggest that the Israeli government, despite Nasser's closing of the Straits of Tiran and removing of the UN Emergency Force, made an offensive attack. For more, see: Roland Popp, "Stumbling Decidedly into the Six-Day War," *Middle East Journal* 60, no. 2 (2006): 281-309. See also: David S. Robarge, "CIA Intelligence of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War: Getting it Right," *Studies in Intelligence* 49, no. 1 (2007), [https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol49no1/html\\_files/arab\\_israeli\\_war\\_1.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/center-for-the-study-of-intelligence/csi-publications/csi-studies/studies/vol49no1/html_files/arab_israeli_war_1.html).

It should also be noted that others look elsewhere for causes of the war. Some, such as historians William Roger Louis and Avi Shlaim assert that the 1967 war was in large part due to conflicts between Arab states, Syria and Egypt in particular. See: Avi Shlaim and William Roger Louis, eds., *The 1967 Arab-Israeli War: Origins and Consequences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 7. This latter

them, it had revealed the hubris of the Arab world—an attitude that had dampened the ability of the Arabs to seriously prepare for impending war. Sadik Al-Azm, a Syrian intellectual and academic active during that time, wrote *al-Naqd al-thati b'ad al-hazima* (*Self-Criticism after the Defeat*), just after the war took place. He described the significance of the Defeat and his reasons for writing his book:

[A] total collapse of the whole Arab Third Worldism, Arab socialism, Arab nationalism. Of course the fact that it was a total collapse was not evident at very first. This is why I wrote my book. I was the first one to say this was a defeat not just a *naksa* [setback]... They used...a euphemism for what happened. And of course I was furious.<sup>6</sup>

For many Palestinian intellectuals, “the Defeat” (*al-hazima*), as the 1967 war came to be called, was an opportunity to look back over the direction of the Resistance since the establishment of Israel and reconsider future strategy, marking a moment of shifting priorities.

This chapter considers the period between the *nakba* and the *hazima* and introduces the Palestinian intellectuals who played critical roles in the PLO during this intellectually fertile period. It explores the different perspectives on the ideological direction that they hoped the movement would take. In doing so, it sheds light on how they conceptualised their roles as revolutionary intellectuals and how their understandings of their roles clashed with the political realities. Throughout these discussions, the development of the Palestinian Resistance movement post-1948 reveals itself. The political events of this period have been covered

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position, however, does not necessarily negate the assertion that the war was an offensive attack on the part of Israel.

<sup>6</sup> Sadik Al-Azm, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 5 January, 2016, Berlin.



extensively by Yezid Sayigh, in his *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*. Sayigh clarifies the activities of each faction in detail, describing both the ideological evolution of the movements, their efforts at armed struggle, as well as the inter-factional tensions that arose due to political obstacles that surrounded them from within and outside the PLO. What this chapter will add, is further insights drawn from the intellectuals themselves, as well as a sense of how the 1948 *nakba* brought forth a new generation of intellectuals, connected to those who worked towards independence at the end of the Ottoman Empire.

### **A New Generation of Arab Intellectuals**

Many of those Arab intellectuals who began to adopt leftist ideas after the 1967 Arab–Israeli war, were those who had adhered to Nasser’s brand of nationalism in the early 1950s. This new generation of intellectuals sought to contribute through their education and their ability to create and develop ideologies for the Resistance. In part inspired by the alarm sounded by Constantine Zurayk, students such as George Habash (1926–2008) began to realise the necessity of responding to recent events and more profoundly, to nurture what would be the Palestinian cause. Habash was particularly influenced by Zurayk’s emphasis on the Arab world’s fragmentation and overall disunity, citing it as being a main reason for the Defeat of 1967.<sup>7</sup> Habash recalls that after the *nakba*, “the atmosphere that was prevalent in the Arab world in general, and in Palestine and Lebanon in particular, pushed every free person to the

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<sup>7</sup> Cited in Ghassan Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad: Wadī’a Ḥaddād, Kārlūs, Anīs al-Naqqāsh, Jūrj Ḥabash* [Secrets of the Black Box: Wadie Haddad, Carlos, Anis al-Naqqash, George Habash] (Beirut: Riad el-Rayyes Books, 2008), 346.

necessity of thinking of a response to the *nakba*.”<sup>8</sup> Habash and many of his peers at the American University of Beirut (AUB) began to do just that. Oftentimes the debate was between two possible directions for the movement in its struggle for Palestinian liberation: Arab nationalism and communism. Habash states that the Soviet Union’s support of the division of Palestine and the creation of Israel, was the main reason that he and his peers voted in favour of Arab nationalism over communism.<sup>9</sup> Many would initially support Arab nationalism, which was gaining in popularity in large part due to the leadership of Nasser, after his rise to power in 1952. Some, such as Nayif Hawatmeh (1935–), were initially partial to nationalism, for the reason stated by Habash, above, but later shifted to support a more Marxist-leaning path to resistance.<sup>10</sup>

In theory, the type of nationalism promoted by Arab nationalists of the time, was not necessarily exclusive in its outlook. While it emphasised Arab unity, its leaders, Nasser in particular, worked to intertwine Third Worldism with nationalism, making it a fundamental part of the ideology. Vijay Prashad accounts for these efforts and their significance to the development of a state-level ideology:

Nehru, Sukarno, and others who had been pushed by similar social processes developed an alternative “national” theory. For them, the nation had to be constructed out of two elements: the history of their struggles against colonialism, and their program for the creation of justice...they had

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 347; and George Habash and Mahmoud Soueid, "Taking Stock: An Interview with George Habash," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 28, no. 1 (1998): 90.

<sup>10</sup> Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad*, 347.

an internationalist ethos, one that looked outward to other anticolonial nations as their fellows. The Third World form of nationalism is thus better understood as an *internationalist nationalism*.<sup>11</sup>

Whether or not this rhetoric was just that, was subject to debate. As will be discussed, those who identified with the far left, for example, found Arab nationalism to serve the interests of specific classes only. With the failures of 1967, however, this changed, as Arab nationalism and the Arab leadership seemed increasingly less appealing due to their weaknesses in forging a new path for Palestine and the region. The newer generation hoped to create a clear path towards liberation of Palestine and the Arab world, targeting imperialism, Zionism, and regimes within the region that they understood to be not strong enough in combatting these forces.

While the younger generation of intellectuals were from a privileged class, they differed from the former generation discussed in Chapter One. This new generation—that of Habash, Shafiq al-Hout (1932–2009), Hawatmeh, and Ghassan Kanafani—were not necessarily of the upper classes, who, like those intellectuals of the Ottoman and Mandate periods had studied abroad in France or England and returned home to work as intermediaries between the British and the Palestinians. Their origins, one could say, were somewhat humbler. Yet, given that most of them studied at universities such as AUB, they represented a new kind of privilege. Of course, there were some exceptions. As discussed in the Introduction, if we can consider classes to be homogenous, we can better understand the position of the intellectuals and their nuanced relationship to the population, inasmuch as they were both near and far to them. This

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<sup>11</sup> Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007), 12.

will become clearer in the following two chapters, as the intellectuals' struggles to reach the masses are discussed.

Many of the intellectuals who helped to shape the factions were far less prominent than those Palestinian families who had ties with the British mandate authority, such as the al-Husseini family. Some—as was the case for Habash and Wadie Haddad (1927–1978), co-founders of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)—became doctors. Habash describes his own upper-middle class Palestinian family: his father owned a small grocery store in Lydda, although he did manage to expand them to a few other cities, such as Jerusalem and Jaffa.<sup>12</sup> Although, for the most part, they came from humbler beginnings,<sup>13</sup> the socially privileged position held by many intellectuals active during this time is evident, not least, in their level of education. Indeed, it was this education that allowed them to emerge as leaders of their movements or to voice their opinions in newspapers throughout the Arab world.

Other Arab intellectuals of the same generation, such as Edward Said (1935–2003), Walid Khalidi (b.1925), and Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (1921–2001), spent a significant portion of their lives abroad, particularly in the United States, and operated more in the academic sphere than those who are the focus of this research. They did, however, maintain connections with intellectuals in the Arab world and often participated in the political discussions and activities of the PLO. Nonetheless, their contributions to the formation of factions, as well as the ideological direction of these factions and of the PLO more generally, is smaller than their contributions to fields such as Middle East studies, Palestinian studies, and post-colonial studies; fields in which

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<sup>12</sup> George Habash [Georges Habache] and Georges Malbrunot, *Les Révolutionnaires ne meurent jamais* [Revolutionaries Never Die] (Paris: Fayard, 2008), 15; See also: Habash and Soueid, "Taking Stock," 88.

<sup>13</sup> A notable exception is al-Azm, who was born into a prominent Syrian family.

they communicated to an English-speaking audience outside of the Arab world. Thus, the focus of their intellectual enterprise was quite different to those working from within the region.

### **The 1950s: Groups Developing; Ideologies Evolving**

#### *The Arab Nationalist Movement*

With the *nakba* of 1948 acting as the initial alarm for resistance against the newly established Israeli state, the 1950s brought great changes in regional politics, reflecting, not necessarily intentionally, the calls of Palestinian intellectuals for liberation and resistance. The 1952 Egyptian revolution saw Nasser rise to power, and his campaign for his own particular form of Arab nationalism gained traction as the 1950s progressed. Palestinian groups began to form, although not without heated discussions over which path to follow: that of communism or that of Arab nationalism. University students at AUB were particularly active in their response to events of 1948. Arguably, during this early period, Arab nationalism became the dominant ideology, in part due to the Soviet's support of the Israeli state in 1948. Habash describes the development of a political orientation amongst the students during this time:

At this point there was a real dialogue within the walls of the university between the nationalist direction and the communist direction. The dispute centred on the legitimacy of the decision to divide Palestine and the recognition of this division, in which the communists defended the decision to divide it because of the Soviet Union's support of this decision. We saw in the communist stance their complete adherence to the Soviet Union. Thus elections amongst the group took place between the nationalists—

including the Bathists—and the communist branch, and my general opinion leaned towards the interests of the nationalists. Subsequently, the results of the [students'] elections were in the favour of nationalist interests.<sup>14</sup>

Al-Azm also recalls the buzzing political environment after the *nakba*, comprising communists, Phalangists, and members of the Arab Nationalist Movement. Of the latter, he notes, “when Nasser became the big political Arab leader...Nasser became his [Habash’s] political party.”<sup>15</sup>

University days were foundational for the growth of ideologies and the establishment of networks among intellectuals. Habash and Haddad, who met at AUB, established, along with others, the ANM, which took shape from 1951 to 1952 and primarily comprised Palestinian AUB students.<sup>16</sup> When the group was formed, it was decided that its slogan would be: “unity, liberation, rebellion.”<sup>17</sup> Unlike the Ba’th party, the ANM saw the bond between Arab unity and Palestinian liberation as absolutely necessary.<sup>18</sup> They also “opposed following the Algerian model of independent military action, fearing that this would simply allow the Arab states to abdicate their responsibility for the liberation of Palestine.”<sup>19</sup> This opposition seems to be a point that eventually harmed resistance efforts, as there was little chance to force Arab states to maintain responsibility and many of the factions chose to fight against Arab regimes, through

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<sup>14</sup> Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad*, 347.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Azm, interview. Al-Azm’s mention of the Phalangists most likely stems from their importance in Arab intellectual life in Beirut during the same time period as well as their general political power, which competed with the PLO in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. See, for example: John P. Entelis, *Pluralism and Party Transformation in Lebanon: Al-Kata’ib, 1936-1970* (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 196-212.

<sup>16</sup> Yezid Sayigh, “Reconstructing the Paradox: The Arab Nationalist Movement, Armed Struggle, and Palestine, 1951-1966,” *Middle East Journal* 45, no. 4 (1991): 609.

<sup>17</sup> George Habash cited in Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad*, 349.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 350.

<sup>19</sup> Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 79.

certain ideologies and, quite literally, when they fought the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan from 1971 to 1972.

Habash describes how the ANM began to take off in Amman, where he and Haddad had a medical clinic together and where they saw, first-hand, the poverty under which Palestinians in Jordan lived.<sup>20</sup> This period helped Habash and Haddad to further develop their ideas for Palestinian liberation, particularly by following the model of Arab nationalism. By 1967, the ANM dissolved, serving as a springboard for other groups, such as the PFLP and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), that would rise to prominence in the late 1960s. Habash became the founding leader of the PFLP, while Haddad was head of its military wing.

Muhammad Jamal Barout discusses the political angle that the intellectuals took, as they became deeply involved in resistance. According to Barout, Habash and his supporters saw their task as being laid out in two stages: the first, to combat imperialism and create a unified Arab nation led by the masses; the second, to engage in an economic struggle that would bring socialism and democracy to the region.<sup>21</sup> They worked to create two fronts: an external one against imperialism and Zionism and an internal one against “traditional politics, the societal framework, and those who defend the two.”<sup>22</sup> This notion of renouncing the traditional culture of the region was one that came to be deeply criticised, not least, by figures such as al-Azm, as will be discussed in Chapter Five. In this chapter, I will discuss the problems surrounding the imperative expressed by some to turn away from what they saw as the negative aspects of Arab

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<sup>20</sup> Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad*, 352–54.

<sup>21</sup> Mohammad Jamal Barut, *Ḥarakat al-qawmiyyīn al-'Arab: al-nash'ah, al-taṭawwar, al-masā'ir* [The Arab Nationalist Movement: Origins, Evolution, Destinies] (Damascus: al-Markaz al-'Arabī lil-Abhāth wal-Dīrāsāt al-Istratījiyah, 1997), 56–57.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

culture. These points were not clearly communicated to the masses, and were not necessarily met with wide support.

The ANM began to describe itself, at least in part, as an anti-colonial force, even as the leadership focused on the necessity of the liberation of Palestine.<sup>23</sup> In working towards their goal of Palestinian liberation, the ANM asserted that this liberation could not occur “unless all Arab countries were fully freed from colonial control and thus able to concentrate their resources against Israel.”<sup>24</sup> In 1952, the Egyptian revolution led by the Free Officers movement, provided further inspiration for the Palestinian Resistance. Al-Azm recalls, “we all thought that Nasser was...a hero of decolonization, and he was conducting a third-world policy, trying to benefit from the Cold War tensions, playing the Americans against the Russians, the Russians against the Americans, that was the game at the time.”<sup>25</sup> This strategy of nonalignment was popular amongst many third-world leaders of the time, such as Sukarno, Nehru, Nasser, and Tito. They, amongst others, met in 1955 in Bandung, Indonesia to discuss such policies, all of which led to a positive neutralist approach to international relations in order to benefit from both sides of the Cold War.<sup>26</sup> As far as the Arab world was concerned, “no leader before Nasser was able to conduct [such] a policy.”<sup>27</sup> One such example of how positive neutralism worked in Nasser’s favour, is during the Tripartite Aggression, when Nasser announced the nationalisation

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<sup>23</sup> Sayigh, "Reconstructing the Paradox," 609.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Azm, interview.

<sup>26</sup> For more, see: Peter Lyon, *Neutralism* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1963), 47.

<sup>27</sup> Al-Azm, interview.



of the Suez Canal and was able to play the tensions between the Eastern and Western Bloc countries to his benefit, ultimately defeating France, the UK, and Israel.<sup>28</sup>

Not only did Nasser's strategy during the 1956 Suez Canal Crisis work to remove foreign powers from Egypt, but it was also a symbolic victory for the Palestinians, who were dealing with their own form of colonialism. As we will soon see, the nationalisation of the Suez Canal could be seen as an act against the colonialist powers by the Third World.<sup>29</sup> This framework, of seeing their struggle as part of the larger anti-colonialist movement, would be adopted by many leftist intellectuals and thinkers of the time. As Salah Khalaf (1933–1991; also known as Abu Iyad) of Fatah, stated in 1969: "the world is in practice divided into three parts: the Eastern camp, the Western camp, and the Third World."<sup>30</sup> Habash explains that initially he and his followers rejected the so-called July 23 Revolution, led by the Free Officers Movement in Egypt, seeing it as simply a military coup. Nonetheless, the nationalisation of the Suez Canal changed their minds, and they subsequently saw Nasser as an ally of the Palestinian Resistance; so much so that after the establishment of the United Arab Republic in 1958, Habash began to question the legitimacy of maintaining the ANM, when Nasser had already made progress towards creating a united Arab nation.<sup>31</sup> For this reason, Habash and the ANM saw their work as being

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<sup>28</sup> For more, see the Chapter 8, "The 'Tripartite Aggression'" in Jeremy Salt, *The Unmaking of the Middle East: A History of Western Disorder in Arab Lands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

<sup>29</sup> For more perspective, see: Salah Khalaf, *Filastīnī bi-lā hawīyah* [Palestinian without Identity] (Hebron: Dār al-Khalīl lil-Nashr, 1996), 21–22.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Paul Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 21.

<sup>31</sup> George Habash cited in Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad*, 355–56.

in conjunction with Nasser's, undertaking "the work of the masses," in order to ensure the presence of popular leadership within Nasser's Arab nation.<sup>32</sup>

### *Fatah*

While there is not an official start date for Fatah, the group began to form in the latter half of the 1950s, in Kuwait, where founder Yasser Arafat (who would be known amongst the Resistance as Abu Ammar) was living at the time.<sup>33</sup> In the early 1950s, future founding members, Arafat and Khalaf, met in Cairo, where they were studying. Khalaf was eighteen at the time, Arafat twenty-two.<sup>34</sup> Like al-Azm and Habash, Khalaf recalls a buzzing environment amongst the Resistance just after the 1948 defeat. Be it AUB or the universities in Cairo, Palestinian students were working towards new methods of resistance throughout the 1950s. Khalaf's motivation for working towards change in those early years, is expressed in his memoir. He states his frustration at corrupt Arab regimes, connected to imperialist powers and not fully willing to support the Palestinian issue, as well as what he saw as the uselessness of the Arab League and traditional leaders who "tried in vain to resurrect" the nationalist movement under the Arab League's patronage.<sup>35</sup> His anger inspired him to fight and partake in resistance that was largely Palestinian-led, an approach shared by Arafat.<sup>36</sup>

While a student, Arafat was president of the Palestinian Students' Union, until he finished studying in 1956. Khalaf recalls that students were excited to work on all aspects

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 356.

<sup>33</sup> Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive*, 14–15.

<sup>34</sup> Khalaf, *Filasṭīnī bi-lā hawīyah*, 18.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

regarding Palestinian resistance.<sup>37</sup> Arafat was also responsible for military exercises for engineer candidates participating in *fedayeen* work against the British in the Suez Canal region.<sup>38</sup> The Tripartite Aggression and the occupation of the Gaza Strip would contribute to Fatah's decision to take up armed struggle. At this point, Palestinians even formed a battalion to fight alongside Egyptians during the 1956 war.<sup>39</sup> The differences in Fatah's and the ANM's reactions to the nationalisation of the Suez Canal demonstrate their diverging approaches to Palestinian liberation. While Fatah tied it to their "ideology of Palestinian nationalism mixed with revolutionary Third World liberation and left wing social thought," the ANM would focus on the positive implications for Arab unity of Nasser's "victory".<sup>40</sup> Before Arab unity and even before armed struggle, Fatah's founders saw a genuine need for a Palestinian organisation.<sup>41</sup> Out of the two groups, it was Fatah that survived and even prospered after the 1967 war. Reasons for this, as well as its significance, will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Fatah announced its commencement of armed action on 2 January 1965.<sup>42</sup> While their activities were initially limited, publicity through periodicals and travel, boosted recruitment numbers and support worldwide.<sup>43</sup> In the early days, amidst all of the trends of the time—communism, the Muslim Brotherhood, the ANM, etc.—Khalaf and Arafat did not choose any particular party, subscribing simply to secular nationalism.<sup>44</sup> Khalaf explains that while he was

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>40</sup> Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive*, 15.

<sup>41</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 83.

<sup>42</sup> Sayigh, "Reconstructing the Paradox," 620.

<sup>43</sup> Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive*, 15.

<sup>44</sup> Khalaf, *Filasṭīnī bi-lā hawīyah*, 18–19.

Muslim and respected the Brotherhood's work against imperialist projects, as well as their popular and easily understandable message to the public to join them, he perceived the Brotherhood to be less tolerant of non-Muslims.<sup>45</sup> After Fatah had been established, Khalil Al-Wazir (1935–1988; also known as Abu Jihad), another founder, even made an appeal to the Muslim Brotherhood to create a branch that would be less outwardly Islamic and more focused on promoting Palestinian liberation through armed struggle, which they rejected.<sup>46</sup>

### **Routes for Nationalism: Strategies**

The union of Syria and Egypt, as the United Arab Republic (UAR), in 1958, was intended to be, at the very least, a symbol of the growth and success of Arab nationalism. This symbol was stymied not long after its inception; by 1961, the UAR had disbanded. Despite the short and arguably ineffective existence of the UAR, intellectuals made efforts to further develop and publicise their efforts. Such work during this time could have contributed to the public image of the movement they were trying to build, as well as their development of mediums by which to spread and develop resistance ideology. Historically and politically, the UAR was significant for the Palestinians, in that its government sought a “place” for the Palestinians within Arab nationalism. The UAR granted Palestinians representative institutions, such as the Palestinian National Union (PNU) and the Legislative Council of the Gaza Strip. Indeed, the UAR was the

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 84. As for the ANM, they did not have a positive relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood, in large part due to the conflict between the Brotherhood and Abdul Nasser. See: Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad*, 348–49.

only Arab state during the 1960s and 1970s to do so.<sup>47</sup> The PNU was supported in large part by Nasser and held public elections “among Palestinian communities in Syria and Gaza,” in 1960 and 1961.<sup>48</sup> Nonetheless, its existence was, by 1961, primarily in name.<sup>49</sup> The Legislative Council was similarly powerless.<sup>50</sup> Publication and broadcasting outlets, such as *Broadcasts of the Voice of Palestine* from Cairo and a weekly supplement to the newspaper *Akhbar al-Youm* (Today’s News), known as *Akhbar Filastin* (News of Palestine), published in the Gaza Strip from March 1963, were also established.<sup>51</sup> Egypt also created a space for “‘Palestinian Representation’ in international and inter-Arab forums by sending delegations on behalf of the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip, to the Arab League Council, to African and Afro-Asiatic conferences, and also, in 1961–63, to the UN General Assembly.”<sup>52</sup> Thus, despite the brevity of the UAR, the Palestinian issue did play a role in its policies, particularly Nasser’s attempts to at least show that the Palestinian voice needed further representation, perhaps accounting for the value many Resistance members saw in the union. Nonetheless, this rhetoric seemed to be not fully manifested in reality.

To many who were involved in building the Resistance movement, the UAR’s decline was a setback for their goals and generally a cause for dismay. Al-Hout’s take on it was that,

The union was a historic opportunity that the Arabs had wasted, because some officials in Damascus had been infiltrated and were actually working for anti-Union

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<sup>47</sup> Moshe Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity, 1959-1974: Arab Politics and the Palestinian Entity* (London; Totowa: F. Cass, 1988), 6.

<sup>48</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 78.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>50</sup> Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 6; and Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 96.

<sup>51</sup> Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 6.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

Arab and Western powers. As for the Egyptians, Nasser had been surrounded with aides who had not understood the significance of the Union to the Arab world.<sup>53</sup>

Nonetheless, others, such as Habash, came to perceive the UAR not as a lost opportunity, but simply as the wrong strategy in working towards a union. He recalls that its failure helped him to see the presence of class struggle in his society, a point that became fundamental to his thinking on resistance.<sup>54</sup> Despite this loss of opportunity, the repercussions of the UAR's end were not entirely negative for the Palestinian Resistance, as exemplified by the exponential growth of ANM members after the UAR, from eighty to 150 full members in 1961 to five thousand full members in 1962.<sup>55</sup>

To Palestinian intellectuals like al-Hout and Habash, the collapse of the UAR was reason to prioritise a Palestinian-led resistance struggle, without anchoring it to any of the Arab states. As al-Hout explains, with the collapse of the UAR, "the need increased for the creation of a Palestinian organization to try to revive a Palestinian national entity."<sup>56</sup> As Sayigh points out: "the proliferation of small, self-styled 'liberation groups' reflected disappointment with Arab political structures and leaders," although most Palestinians were not officially affiliated with any group at that time.<sup>57</sup> Al-Hout helped to form the Palestinian Liberation Front (PLF) in the same year. He explains that the group worked to call for a national Palestinian organisation to

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<sup>53</sup> Shafiq al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO: The Inside Story of the Palestinian Struggle*, trans. Laila Uthmān and Hader Al-Hout (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 43.

<sup>54</sup> George Habash and Mahmoud Soueid, "Taking Stock: An Interview with George Habash," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 28, no. 1 (1998): 92.

<sup>55</sup> Sayigh, "Reconstructing the Paradox," 615.

<sup>56</sup> al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO*, 43.

<sup>57</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 95.

be part of a broader pan-Arab movement.<sup>58</sup> The PLF was a smaller group and had arguably less impact than other factions during the years leading up to the 1967 war. Nonetheless, along with the ANM, the PLF provided recruitment for the PFLP in 1967. All three groups, the ANM, Fatah, and the PLF, recruited members in refugee camps.<sup>59</sup> The ANM also experienced a change in perspective in 1961. At this point, the two main goals of the ANM—that of Arab unity and Palestinian liberation—became less intertwined. Instead, two camps emerged: those who chose to focus on Arab unity and those, primarily Palestinians, who focused their strengths and resources on armed struggle and the liberation of Palestine.<sup>60</sup> These two camps would become even more distinct by 1964.

The establishment of Palestinian-led groups demonstrated the desire to rely on themselves, more than on the success of Arab nationalist leaders in the larger Arab political arena. The occurrence of this shift in priorities, was at a time when guerrilla warfare was on the rise and its apparent global effectiveness gave impetus to Palestinians to adopt such tactics. As Paul Chamberlin points out, “this shift away from Cairo and Damascus as model struggles underscored the fundamental differences between the Palestinian guerrillas and the older Arab nationalists, reinforcing arguments for an independent Palestinian nationalism.”<sup>61</sup> It also brought forth arguments for a larger liberation struggle, one that would be seen, to the leftist intellectuals in the movement, as fundamental to the Palestinian cause. At the same time, all groups continued to seek (and, indeed, rely on) the military and financial support of Arab

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<sup>58</sup> al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO*, 43. The PLF is a different faction from the one that now exists under the same name.

<sup>59</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 94.

<sup>60</sup> Sayigh, “Reconstructing the Paradox,” 614.

<sup>61</sup> Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive*, 20.

states. Some groups, following ideologies that linked them to guerrilla movements around the globe, received ideological and, in some cases, material, support from such movements, giving them further impetus to move in the direction of organised, independent armed struggle. This type of armed struggle would not be possible without the participation of the wider population. Hisham Sharabi identifies the significance of this time period for the growth of the Palestinian Resistance, through the inclusion of a larger, and broader, swath of society. He found the involvement of the masses—including their involvement in armed struggle—to be crucial in the success of the movement. It was, in fact, a means by which the gap could be closed between the people and the revolution that needed to involve them.<sup>62</sup>

### **Working Towards Armed Struggle: Evolving Ideologies**

The importance of armed struggle for the Palestinians became increasingly relevant as tensions between Egypt and Syria heightened, and as conflicts between Israel and the Western powers, on one side, and the Arab states, on the other, continued. By the mid-1960s, the Palestinian resistance movement was evolving into an anti-imperialist struggle. Despite the push by some members of the ANM to enter quickly into armed struggle following the dissolution of the UAR, Habash sought to follow Nasser in identifying the primary enemy as the United States, rather than Israel, and believed that plans for resistance needed to be made slowly and meticulously.<sup>63</sup> Despite the hesitancy, on the part of its leaders, the ANM underwent training operations as well as information gathering in northern Israel. However, they did not

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<sup>62</sup> Hisham Sharabi, "al-'Aql wal-'anf: khawāṭir hawl al-thawrah al-Filasṭīniyah," [Reason and Violence: Reflections on the Palestinian Revolution.] *al-Mawāqif*, no. 2 (1969): 139–41.

<sup>63</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 109.



commence full-fledged operations, nor did they make a point of advertising the battles in which they did engage.<sup>64</sup> Between 1956 and 1958, they recruited Palestinian refugees to perform raids on Israel. These recruits came to be known as the Heroes of the Return (*Abtal al-'Awda*).<sup>65</sup> Involving the refugee population was both of utmost importance and a great challenge for the intellectuals, particularly when it came to mobilising them around class. Indeed, the inclusion of the population at-large was a key point of this growing resistance movement's plans and general ideology.

Sayigh explains that the ANM's balance between performing some operations yet not advertising them, worked well for its two camps—those to whom Palestinian liberation should occur *before* Arab unity and those to whom Arab unity was a means to Palestinian liberation. To the ANM, without proper care, guerrilla action could be seen as little more than an “emotional eruption.”<sup>66</sup> This cautious approach, coupled with the group's declining relationship with Nasser post-1963, ultimately led to the ANM's demise.<sup>67</sup>

While the ANM worked to remain “below entanglement,” Fatah, “sought ‘the conscious entanglement...of the Arab masses as a whole, and not of the Arab rulers and states as such.’”<sup>68</sup> In fact, Fatah's insistence on not meddling in the affairs of Arab states, marked one of the great differences between them and the more left-leaning factions, the PFLP in particular. This difference will be discussed further in Chapters Four and Five. Furthermore, Fatah stressed the

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<sup>64</sup> Sayigh, “Reconstructing the Paradox” 620–22.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 610. Syria's perspective that the PLO was simply a tool of Nasser's is also recounted in al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO*, 51.

<sup>66</sup> Sayigh, “Reconstructing the Paradox,” 622.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 628–29.

<sup>68</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 119.

importance of militant action, undertaken popularly, with or without the support of governments. Sayigh also points out that the faction's plans were vague, and that they essentially expected to develop them as they progressed in their struggle.<sup>69</sup> This difference in approach, regarding when to become involved in resistance, sheds light on the way in which Fatah was eventually able to gain precedence over the ANM, as well as other factions of the PLO after 1967. Abu Iyad expressed this in his memoir:

In the first few months after the 1967 war, we were facing the enemy ourselves, our weapons in our hands, when the other organisations that would form the Rejection Front after a few years, did not even appear on the scene, or they had not yet taken the decision to engage in armed struggle.<sup>70</sup>

As we will see, armed struggle became not only a point of strategy, it was also a point of pride, creating competition between the groups and causing rifts between them.

Syria helped to provide Fatah with a different framework for when and how armed struggle should be implemented, to that provided by Nasser to the ANM. According to Sayigh, supporting Fatah was a way to challenge Nasser's power. Sayigh quotes one senior Syrian official in the early 1960s "We shall rub Nasir's nose in the mud of Palestine...that is where his end will be."<sup>71</sup> Fatah, Sayigh explains, "offered suitable means to that end."<sup>72</sup> Meanwhile, debates took place in the Ba'ath party regarding the place of the Palestinians within the party, ultimately leading to the creation of a separate Palestinian branch in 1963. This reveals "the

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>70</sup> Khalaf, *Filasṭīnī bi-lā hawīyah*, 54.

<sup>71</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 104.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

growing polarization of Arab regional politics and above all the sharpening rivalry between Damascus and Cairo.”<sup>73</sup> These rivalries are significant because they play a large role in how these factions developed. Syria’s position on Fatah, contributed to its success as an armed movement. Ironically, it is this success that not only put it in a strong position after the 1967 war, but also, along with other factors, impelled Nasser to support it over the ANM.

Along with interstate rivalries, splits and disagreements within factions continued to take place throughout this period. These were largely ideological disagreements, and are important because they demonstrate the types of discussions taking place within the Palestinian intellectual community at that time. One such example occurred in the ANM. Habash recalls that more leftist-leaning figures, such as Mohsin Ibrahim and Mohamed Kashli, thought that tangible achievements towards resistance had not been made. To them, armed struggle through the ANM was not possible, and furthermore, they felt that Arab unity, as the ANM was striving for, could not reasonably be achieved.<sup>74</sup> Sayigh explains that to Ibrahim and Kashli, as well as Hawatmeh,

Social and economic structures were the determining factors of Arab society. Ibrahim signalled further movement in this direction when he became the founding editor of the new central mouthpiece of the ANM, the Lebanese-registered weekly *al-Hurriyya* [Freedom], penning numerous articles to argue that Arab nationalism could no longer be separated in concept or practice from social revolution.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>74</sup> Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad*, 360.

<sup>75</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 79.

Perhaps then, the key to resistance would be embracing Arab nationalism on a more popular level, having it stem not from rulers but from the populace. Meanwhile, others such as Habash, Hani al-Hindi (c. 1925–2016), and Haddad recognised that while the ANM was not perfect, there was still potential for successful Arab unity, under Nasser.<sup>76</sup>

### **Factions Come into their Own**

The political stances and actions of Arab regimes towards Palestinian factions, also caused more immediate concern within the Palestinian Resistance. By 1963, the ANM was under pressure to act more independently and to enter into armed struggle.<sup>77</sup> At that time, ANM branches, which existed throughout the Arab world, were regrouped as a result of the creation of the Palestinian Action Command (PAC), which would have some authority over the Palestinian members of the ANM and, as of 1964, would be a fully autonomous branch.<sup>78</sup> There was some resistance, on the basis of Arab unity, to the new groups within the ANM that would answer only to the PAC.<sup>79</sup> Such concerns, over Arab unity versus Palestinian resistance, were the basis for the split within the ANM that became clear in 1964. Habash, Hindi, and Haddad, adhering to Nasser's wishes, were more cautious about independent, Palestinian military actions than others in the ANM, such as Hawatmeh, who saw Palestinian armed struggle as a means to Arab unity.<sup>80</sup> The former group employed the supplement *Filastin* of the newspaper

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<sup>76</sup> Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad*, 360.

<sup>77</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 108.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Sayigh, "Reconstructing the Paradox," 617, 619.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

*al-Muharrir* (The Liberator), with Kanafani as the editor of the supplement. The ANM weekly *al-Hurriya* was used by the left and the right to disseminate their respective ideologies.<sup>81</sup> The split in the ANM added to the movement's instability at a time when tensions with Fatah were already running high, as they competed for respect and success in the region and on the global stage, and as Fatah moved forward with plans to commence armed struggle. By 1969, Fatah received five million dollars in weapons from China.<sup>82</sup>

Alongside support from China, the Algerian and Cuban revolutions were important points of reference and support for Fatah.<sup>83</sup> The end of the Algerian revolution saw efforts by the new Algerian government to support other resistance movements. In 1964, Fatah members met Che Guevara in Algeria, and were assured of Cuba's willingness to support their cause.<sup>84</sup> The former mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini, mobilised his followers in the refugee camps in support of Arafat.<sup>85</sup> Armed action and support began to increase throughout the 1960s, leading to Fatah's strong position after the 1967 war. In 1968, Fatah sent four hundred volunteers to Algeria to be trained militarily.<sup>86</sup> Fatah's insistence upon an immediate armed struggle differed not only from the position of the ANM, but also from that of the PLO, at the time of its establishment in 1964.

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 621.

<sup>82</sup> Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive*, 30.

<sup>83</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 120–21. and Khalaf, *Filasṭīnī bi-lā hawīyah*, 22.

<sup>84</sup> Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive*, 30.

<sup>85</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 104.

<sup>86</sup> Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive*, 30.

## Tensions with Jordan Building

While the Egyptian–Syrian rivalry contributed to the development of the ANM and Fatah, Jordan's stance on the Palestinians would set them up for a rocky path with the Palestinian Resistance in the early 1970s. This is not to say that Egypt and Syria were heroes of the Resistance, but rather, to highlight the high level of hostility that built up between the Hashemite kingdom and the Palestinian Resistance. Hostility was also apparent between Egypt and Jordan and between Syria and Jordan. An early example of this hostility is Egypt's refusal to recognise Jordan's annexation of the West Bank in 1949, as well as Nasser's stance on the Jordanian kingdom as an "artificial creation."<sup>87</sup> Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, it is alleged that Egypt and Syria worked to undermine the Jordanian Hashemite kingdom. Aside from attempts on the king's life, which were, depending on the time, allegedly either supported by Egypt or Syria or both, King Hussein also viewed efforts at an independent Palestinian entity as a threat to his regime.<sup>88</sup> The Prime Minister of Jordan, Hazza' al-Majali, announced, "the Jordanian government is the sole legal representative of the Palestinians inhabiting Jordan, who possess the right to decide by legal means everything related to their rights in Filastin [Palestine]."<sup>89</sup> Such control over Palestinians would naturally cause tensions not just with other regimes, but also with the Palestinians themselves. In 1961, Jordan began offering Palestinians living within Jordan or the West Bank Jordanian citizenship.<sup>90</sup> Following the 1967 war, Jordan's annexed territory became smaller, creating, therefore, a smaller area of rule, one in which "the

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<sup>87</sup> Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 7.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>90</sup> Palestinian News and Information Agency (WAFA), "Historical Background: 1948-1964," WAFA, <http://www.wafainfo.ps/atemplate.aspx?id=3744#>.

Palestinian organizations gained prominence in Jordan.”<sup>91</sup> This prominence, coupled with increasing tensions with the Hashemite kingdom, which will be discussed in Chapter 4, contributed to the attempted overthrow of the kingdom by factions of the Resistance in September of 1970, known as Black September. As Sayigh explains, “although Israel was seen as the ultimate threat, Palestinian action was as much aimed at the Jordanian authorities, in line with the crescendo in the media exchanges between Egypt, the PLO, and Jordan.”<sup>92</sup> Such turmoil within the Arab political arena pushed the Resistance to work toward a Palestinian-focused struggle throughout 1967–1974.

### **Establishment of the PLO**

On 28 May 1964, al-Shuqeiry, who would soon become the head of the PLO, spoke to a Palestinian assembly in East Jerusalem, working to convince them of the need for an organisation that would unify all groups working for Palestinian resistance. He explained: “we have employed this term—Palestinian entity—for many years, [but] it is alien to Arab and international life.” He went on to note, “The challenge was how to give this entity meaning and substance in the complex Arab environment.”<sup>93</sup> Al-Shuqeiry emphasised to the audience, amongst whom were Egyptian and Jordanian delegates, that the PLO would not work to gain control over the West Bank or the Gaza Strip.<sup>94</sup> According to al-Hout, Jordan had initially been opposed to the idea of the PLO, thinking that they would risk losing the West Bank. This

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<sup>91</sup> Shemesh, *The Palestinian Entity*, 8.

<sup>92</sup> Sayigh, “Reconstructing the Paradox,” 627.

<sup>93</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 97.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

assumption was in part due to Syria's stance that there could be no independent entity without claim to a particular territory, and they were willing to give up the portion of Palestine which they controlled. This would also mean that Nasser would need to give up the Gaza Strip.<sup>95</sup> Nonetheless, the Palestinian assembly became the Palestinian National Council (PNC), and it approved the establishment of the PLO and its national charter.<sup>96</sup> Despite the PLO's initial unpopularity amongst Resistance factions, the 1967 war would change the factions and some Arab states' opinion towards it and its potential as a useful Resistance cell. Al-Shuqeiry's ousting in 1967 would lead to Fatah joining and controlling the PLO. Fatah's leadership position in the organisation was in large part due to the military operations it undertook, during its formative years.

Members of the traditional Palestinian leadership, al-Husseini in particular, were not happy with the establishment, and subsequent Arab recognition, of the PLO, an organisation that likely represented the demise of his power. He successfully lobbied for a Saudi boycott of the Jerusalem assembly and for them to not recognise the PLO.<sup>97</sup> While al-Husseini often worked with the Mandate powers, this newer generation of Palestinians was willing to take up arms to defend their cause. It is with the establishment of the PLO, an entity formally recognised along with its military wing, the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA), at the second Arab summit conference in September 1964, that a new phase in the history of the Palestinians and their resistance began.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO*, 52.

<sup>96</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 98.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 99, 102.



Meanwhile, the tensions between Syria and Egypt continued, as Nasser had been a strong supporter of establishing the PLO. Given the existing discrepancies between Nasser and Syria, the Syrians perceived the PLO to simply be Nasser's tool for maintaining control over the Palestinians.<sup>99</sup> In fact, at an Arab summit conference in September 1964, Syrian president Hafiz al-Assad claimed that, with the help of forty Arab brigades, he could defeat the Israelis in four days.<sup>100</sup> The Palestinians continued to be a pawn in the political games of regional powers. This gave the Palestinian factions, at that time Syrian-backed Fatah, the Egyptian-backed ANM, and the partially independent, partially Egyptian- and Jordanian-backed PLO, an opportunity to use their respective support systems in order to launch an armed struggle against Israel and for the factions to vie for power amongst each other. The power struggle and ideological discussions would continue throughout 1967–1974.

### **Initial Ideologies of the PLO**

The PLO focused its attention on statehood, above any other ideological endeavour. Its national charter stated: "Palestine is an Arab homeland tied by Arab nationalism to all the Arab countries...which together compose the wider Arab homeland."<sup>101</sup> Initially, the PLO hoped to unite all groups, not necessarily under "one umbrella," but to dissolve all groups into one. While some factions of the Palestinian Resistance worked to define a broader ideology that the faction would follow, the PLO's national charter stated that the political, economic, and social

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 98.

system implemented by Palestine could only be discussed after liberation.<sup>102</sup> Such a stance could be seen most clearly in Fatah, differing substantially from sections of the ANM, as well as the soon-to-be-established PFLP, which, like resistance groups worldwide, at that time, saw their movement as inextricably linked to a broader political ideology, such as socialism or Marxism.

The hostility factions felt towards the PLO would continue, although it should be noted that not all appeared to be disdainful towards al-Shuqeiry. Al-Hout describes him as “intelligent and ambitious” and “well aware of Palestinians’ needs.”<sup>103</sup> When discussion of a Fatah–PLO merger took place, al-Shuqeiry “correctly understood that Fateh hoped to assume control of the PLO and declined the merger.”<sup>104</sup> Despite the recognition that the PLO received from the Palestinian Assembly in 1964,<sup>105</sup> Fatah and the ANM remained hesitant to join the PLO. For Fatah, this was in part due to their impression of al-Shuqeiry’s character, as well as his ties to Nasser.<sup>106</sup> Furthermore, they accused al-Shuqeiry of empty rhetoric, in which, according to Fatah, he spoke of the importance of armed struggle without taking ample action to put it into place.<sup>107</sup> For the ANM, the PLO represented the end of independent Palestinian resistance and the beginning of an entity allegiant to the Arab states and subject to their motivations and wills.<sup>108</sup> Perhaps, this also may have been an issue for Fatah, as Fatah leaders, Khalaf in particular, were already frustrated with Arab leadership, with some exceptions, and the Arab

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>103</sup> al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO*, 50.

<sup>104</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 121.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 97–98.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 101.

League. According to al-Hout, al-Shuqeiry was chosen by a majority of Arab states as Palestine's representative to the Arab League.<sup>109</sup> This recognition, however, still proved enough incentive for Fatah and the ANM to join the PLO and alter it from within.<sup>110</sup> Fatah's launching of an armed struggle, however, took precedence over any internal infiltration of the PLO. Fatah used their Syrian connection in order to establish a base from which to launch attacks.<sup>111</sup> Its actions against the PLO became more subversive. In proving itself as a guerrilla organisation and capitalising on the juxtaposition between its methods and the more conventional methods of the PLO, it could garner even more support.<sup>112</sup> Thus, while guerrilla action preceded the 1967 war, its immediate importance, especially to Arab statesmen, became all the more clear with the Defeat.

### **Approaching 1967**

The ANM's stance—that a more restrained, calculated struggle was the way forward—juxtaposed sharply with that of Fatah's and created an insurmountable obstacle during talks between the two groups in 1966.<sup>113</sup> A year earlier, the PLO, under the leadership of al-Shuqeiry, began to adopt Fatah's stance on guerrilla warfare—that is, “conscious entanglement” (*al-tawrit al-w'ai*). Al-Shuqeiry's logic was that this would essentially embarrass Arab states into taking part in military action.<sup>114</sup> One could argue that this happened only after the 1967 war,

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<sup>109</sup> al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO*, 50.

<sup>110</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 101.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 105; and Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive*, 15.

<sup>112</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 119–21.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 132.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

when leaders such as Nasser began to give more support to the armed struggle. Like other thinkers at the time, al-Shuqeiry also emphasised that the lack of unity of the Arab states was a primary reason for their defeat.<sup>115</sup> It is his focus on Arab unity, absent of more left-leaning ideologies, that seemed to separate him from some of the intellectuals who later became involved in the leftist factions of the PLO. Al-Shuqeiry's leadership also suffered during this period, as he strove to give himself more power within the PLO. He appointed himself, for example, as the official spokesman.<sup>116</sup> Al-Shuqeiry also worked to gather all Palestinian factions under the leadership of the PLO. This effort proved largely unsuccessful, due to a lack of funds, his leadership style, and, perhaps most importantly, his insistence that there was no point in any other group apart from the PLO.<sup>117</sup> It makes sense that al-Shuqeiry's keen sense of Arab unity would shape his preference for the PLO as sole political player in Palestine.<sup>118</sup> Given the problems that fragmentation caused, as we will soon see, al-Shuqeiry's stance on unity could be considered to have been too easily dismissed. At this time (the mid-to-late 1960s), there were seventeen factions within the Palestinian Resistance; they often used their factions' publications to respond to one another.<sup>119</sup> Al-Hout recalls that his faction, the PLF, often wrote articles in their publication, *al-Hawadith* (Events), rejecting "the theory of 'entanglement' (getting Arab regimes involved in a war against Israel)."<sup>120</sup> According to al-Hout, founding

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<sup>115</sup> Khayrīyah Qāsimīyah, *Aḥmad al-Shuqayry: Z'aīman Filasṭīnīyan wa rā'idan 'Arabīyan* [Ahmed al-Shuqeiry: Palestinian Leader and Arab Pioneer], ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Sayyid Aḥmad and 'Azmī al-Ṣāliḥī (al-Mu'asasah al-'Arabīyah al-Dawliyah lil-Nashr wal-Tawziyah, 2005), 536.

<sup>116</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 132.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>118</sup> See for example: Qāsimīyah, *Aḥmad al-Shuqayry: Z'aīman Filasṭīnīyan wa rā'idan 'Arabīyan*, 536.

<sup>119</sup> al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO*, 45–46.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 46.

member of Fatah, Khaled al-Hassan, brought the idea of conscious entanglement to the faction. The PLF, however, “believed that decisions of war or peace should be taken only on a pan-Arab level, governed by a united Arab strategy and administered by a responsible leadership.”<sup>121</sup> Fatah’s stance on conscious entanglement appeared to change by 1968. Sayigh quotes an anonymous Fatah leader, at the time, saying: “[Fatah] has raised the slogans: unity of Palestinian effort, rejection of the Arab states, and distancing the Palestinians from social battles on the basis that armed action takes priority in order to return to the occupied part of their homeland.”<sup>122</sup>

While the PLO was working to strengthen itself and carry out military operations, Syrian-supported Fatah was also working to strengthen its armed operations. In 1965, Syria looked for more ways to strengthen their support of Fatah while at the same time maintaining a safe distance from its military operations. After a bumpy period from 1965 to 1966, with many internal movements and shifts of power, Fatah began to stabilise. It received a wealth of support from Syria, where the ANM was outlawed, and thus gained many members during this time.<sup>123</sup> The ANM also worked to strengthen its stance on armed struggle, somewhat unsuccessfully.<sup>124</sup> While some operations did begin, the ANM spent much of its time in Gaza, where along with Ba’thists and communists, it sought political sway within the PLO.<sup>125</sup> At this point, the Lebanese newspaper *al-Hurriya* as well as the *Filastin* supplement of *al-Muharrir* became important for disseminating the ANM’s socialist ideology, as well as developing its

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 92.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 126–27.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 130.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

“increasingly Palestinian focus.”<sup>126</sup> Despite varying viewpoints within the ANM regarding when to take up military action, Habash stuck with Nasser’s insistence on postponing military action, with the exception of small operations within Israel.<sup>127</sup> Thus, even after the creation of the PLO, the purpose, manner, and timing of armed struggle, remained connected to particular perspectives on Arab nationalism and, ultimately, to the policies of two now opposing powers—Syria and Egypt. Furthermore, within the ANM, there was a fear that the creation of a single body like the PLO, would relieve Arab states of their responsibility to contribute to the Palestinian cause.<sup>128</sup>

With minimal efforts at armed struggle in a climate of burgeoning military operations, the ANM began to decline. In 1966, it broke ties with Nasser, due to an Egyptian government-incited internal coup in a Yemeni ANM branch, “the ANM reflected much of the causes of concern and urgency that now set Nasir [Nasser] on the collision course that was to lead him into war with Israel in June 1967.”<sup>129</sup> It seemed that Nasser was unable to steer the Arab world in a direction that would lead them to victory. Without the support of Nasser and without having shown itself as a group fulfilling, as well as supporting, the ideas of Arab unity and guerrilla action, the ANM proved not strong enough to stand amongst the members of the Palestinian Resistance post-June 1967.<sup>130</sup> As the ANM declined, it became the foundation for other factions that formed after the 1967 war, namely the PFLP and later the DFLP. In fact, the

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 131.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 131–32.

<sup>129</sup> Sayigh, "Reconstructing the Paradox," 625–26.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 627.

establishment of the PFLP caused the ANM to lose many key members, further contributing to the group's loss in strength.<sup>131</sup>

After smaller operations in Israel, the Heroes of the Return, which the ANM, the PLO, and the PLA worked to re-establish in 1966, announced in May 1967, that they were ready for war.<sup>132</sup> Of course, this call came too late.<sup>133</sup> Throughout the period that the Heroes of the Return were active, tensions between the ANM and Jordan grew. Al-Shuqeiry also had his own grudge towards King Hussein, who had ignored al-Shuqeiry's calls for cooperation between the Jordanian army and the PLA.<sup>134</sup> Tensions with King Hussein created complaints from critics of the PLO. This combined with a series of explosions in East Jerusalem, claimed by the PLO, created a crisis with Jordan, as well as an internal crisis in the PLO. The PLO headquarters in Jordan was closed, and PLA members in Cairo, originally hailing from Syria, were sent back to Syria. These events, combined with al-Shuqeiry's reaction to them (including a reduction of pay to officers, which he soon revoked), created an unstable PLO that was "unprepared for the war that would erupt in June."<sup>135</sup> Meanwhile, armed strikes by Fatah, and the ANM's increased raids, proved too little too late. The groups would soon be rocked by the Defeat, which shocked Arab states into further supporting a unified Palestinian front, that would see the amalgamation of factions into the PLO. Tensions between Arab states and factions, as well as between the factions themselves, would not cease.

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 628.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 624.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 627–28.

<sup>134</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 138.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 138–39.

## June 1967

From 5–10 June 1967, the Israelis gained control of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Sinai Peninsula, and the Golan Heights. Nasser was chastened and would never be the same. Indeed, on 9 June 1967, he offered, to a crowd that would not allow it, to step down. If there were ever any hesitation amongst the Resistance regarding the need for a more independent struggle, those hesitations were now quieted. This would be their opportunity to forge a new path and to ride the wave of global, guerrilla resistance movements. Yet, Arab support, not just Palestinian, mattered, and after the 1967 war, Fatah took the lead as the most powerful group, with Egypt and President Nasser choosing to support it.<sup>136</sup> Nasser's earlier hesitance at supporting armed struggle initiated by the Palestinians, now disappeared, given the magnitude of his defeat. The dissolution of the ANM yielded ground to the PFLP, which merged with the PLF, the Heroes of the Return which was essentially ANM's military front, Ahmed Z'arur (a former Jordanian army captain), and pro-Nasser, ex-Jordanian officers affiliated with Z'arur.<sup>137</sup> As we will see in the coming chapter, and as is evident in the initial efforts of the two groups, Fatah and the PFLP (the ANM at this point) would compete for the stronger position within the Palestinian Resistance, and the competition would be defined in large part by the groups' willingness and ability to partake in armed struggle.<sup>138</sup>

Fatah's prominence began to rise in 1968, when their presence in a symbolically significant battle heightened their status. The Battle of Karamah took place in Jordan in March

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<sup>136</sup> Yezid Sayigh, "Turning Defeat into Opportunity: The Palestinian Guerrillas after the June 1967 War," *Middle East Journal* 46, no. 2 (1992): 264.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 256-57.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.



1968, between IDF forces and Palestinian guerrilla fighters. The PFLP was absent, showing Fatah as the main Palestinian political faction present on the battlefield.<sup>139</sup> Aside from missing the battle, the soon-to-be PFLP also proved to be weak in other armed efforts at the time. A series of raids were planned to coincide with their establishment, yet the operations were far from successful and many of its key leaders were arrested in the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>140</sup> The Palestinian Resistance, and Fatah in particular, celebrated at long last a battle won at least from the Arab perspective, after a great defeat in the 1967 war.<sup>141</sup> Due in part to the internal crisis within the PLO and in part to Fatah's military gain and overall increased respect, Fatah was able to take the main stage in the PLO, appointing Arafat as its chairman in 1969.<sup>142</sup> Egypt began to pour support into Fatah, while Syria was more hesitant, although it still allowed their presence in the country. Iraq also worked to support Fatah militarily.<sup>143</sup> Syria "reactivated its old feud with the ANM" and imprisoned Habash. His absence led to an internal feud with the PFLP, between the ANM and Ahmed Jibril, a founding member of the PFLP who then left the PFLP in the summer of 1968 and later formed the PFLP-General Command.<sup>144</sup>

## A New Era

Al-Azm notes in, *Self-Criticism after the Defeat*, that in Arab countries, talk of war with Israel, in the media for example, was not uncommon. Furthermore, immediate and definitive victory by

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 264.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 2557.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 264.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 258–60.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 264.

the Arab nations, was broadly accepted as the likely outcome. Al-Azm quotes Mohamed Hassanein Haikel, a widely known and trusted Egyptian journalist and close confidant of Nasser, writing in *al-Ahram* (The Pyramids) newspaper on the eve of the war, stating, “Israel is drawing near almost certain defeat.”<sup>145</sup> The exact motivations behind Haikel’s statement are unclear, though what is interesting is the juxtaposition between Haikel’s assertion that war and victory were inevitable and al-Azm’s implication that not only was this war in no way a surprise but the careful planning of the Israelis was most likely going to lead them to victory. Al-Hout’s use of the term “Six-Year war,” references the events in the years leading up to the 1967 Arab-Israeli war as well as Israel’s long-term plans for such a war:

We had chosen a name for the June War [the 1967 Arab-Israeli War] that was appropriate for us, that is “the Six-Day War,” and the Arabs adopted it and began using it with naïveté and simplicity. Had they known the truth—any Arab—as we knew it—any Israeli—they would have called it “the Six-Year War.”<sup>146</sup>

The years leading up to the war, with their turmoil and constant evolutions of Palestinian factions, reveal the environment under which, for the Palestinians, the nationalisation of the Suez Canal, the collapse of the UAR, Algerian victory against French colonial rule, and, finally the 1967 war, created new opportunities for resistance that increasingly turned away from Arab nationalism and, as much as possible, from the leadership of Arab statesmen and towards the *fedayeen* and the new generation of Arab intellectuals. This younger generation of intellectuals and fighters largely rejected the ways of prominent Palestinian families who

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<sup>145</sup> Sadik al-Azm, *Self-Criticism after the Defeat* (London: Saqi Books, 2011), 36.

<sup>146</sup> Shafiq al-Hout, “al-Ḥarb al-ayām al-sittah...am al-senawāt al-sitt,” [The Six-Day War...or The Six-Year War]. *al-Muḥarrir* 1968.

worked with governing authorities as well as the political methods typically employed in the region, such as acceptance in the Arab League.<sup>147</sup> The fall of institutionalised Arab unity and the rise of a more grass-roots Arab unity and Palestinian unity and self-reliance is a key theme of the Resistance from 1967 to 1973, and its roots lie in the period leading up to the conflict.

Al-Hout explains in a 1969 article, “it is up to us to struggle daily to clarify, develop, and strengthen the crucial connection that links the struggle of our Palestinian people to the struggle of our broader Arab community.”<sup>148</sup> His call makes clear that what is needed, in his opinion, is a stronger tie between the Palestinian struggle and the broader struggle by Arab resistance groups and people in general—not necessarily Arab regimes—against colonisation and subordination. For some groups within the Palestinian Resistance support, not only from Arabs but from all who were resisting colonisation or other forms of marginalisation, was important to achieve success. Al-Hout brings this comment to light in 1968, when the Palestinian Resistance in its “new” form was beginning to take shape. The factions within it, now comprising a somewhat broader range of Palestinian society than the societies of the late Ottoman Empire, could reach out to and identify with resistance groups around the world, breaking any pre-conceived notions of who were the Palestinians and who spoke for them. As Chamberlin explains:

The creation of a cosmopolitan Palestinian identity cut across established cognitive geographies, bringing the PLO into dialogue with radical groups around the world. The

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<sup>147</sup> Although Shuqairy did seek official recognition from Arab leaders, he still maintained that the Palestinians needed their own body to represent their needs.

<sup>148</sup> Shafiq al-Hout, “al-Kīlūmatr al-akhīr fī riḥlat al-ṣamūd” [The Final Kilometer on the Trip to Solidarity]. *al-Muḥarrir*, 5 July 1969.

image of the fedayeen cadre as an Arab Che Guevara challenged Orientalist constructions of the Arab militant as a backward, anti-semitic, religious fanatic bent on driving the Jews into the sea and instead put forward a picture of the Palestinian as a liberation fighter, struggling for the cause of anti-imperialism and progressive revolution in the developing world.<sup>149</sup>

Whether or not their goals would be achieved, the Palestinians made great strides in shaping their own resistance and making their cause known locally and globally between 1948 and 1967.

The new generation worked to develop and adopt ideologies, such as Arab nationalism, socialism, Third Worldism, and Marxism, that became critical for the development of ideology within the Palestinian Resistance. With the breakup of the UAR in 1961, came disappointment to many members of the Palestinian Resistance, who then decided to move away from Arab nationalism in order to adopt new paths to resistance. These reforms to resistance would become even greater after the 1967 defeat. In 1964, the PLO was created in an effort to unite all Palestinian factions. As Chamberlin explains, “the emergence of the PLO came at a key moment in the larger story of global integration and thus showcases the ways in which non-state actors could take advantage of an increasingly interconnected world order and the growing importance of universal concepts of liberation and human rights.”<sup>150</sup> Nonetheless, the PLO did not gain the respect and interest of many of these factions, such as Fatah, until after the 1967 war.

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<sup>149</sup> Chamberlin, "The Struggle Against Oppression Everywhere," 38–39.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 27.

While the decisions of Arab intellectuals may not have had as much impact as the leaders of politically influential Arab countries such as Nasser in Egypt, who supported the establishment of the PLO, their ideas and choices have an impact on the development and evolutions of factions that take the main stage just after the 1967 war. It was at this point that the Palestinian Resistance appeared to have formulated a clearer idea of the means by which they could achieve liberation. By this point resistance ideologies and groups, globally, were having growing success in defeating foreign powers, such as the FLN in Algeria and the Viet Cong in Vietnam. These groups provided, at the very least, ideological support, and in some cases even military support, for the Palestinian Resistance, at a moment in which budding resistance groups, in part led by the new generation of intellectuals, worked to secure support and an ideological basis for their activities.

While the intellectuals had a unique opportunity to promote and develop their ideas for a larger liberation movement after the 1967 war, disagreements were already prevalent between them. While some saw the decline of Arab nationalism as an opportunity for Palestinian-led resistance, others saw this moment as the point at which to push for fundamental changes in Arab society, including changes to political leadership. This fundamental difference in ideas, at a time when unity could be understood as absolutely necessary, was one of the foremost limitations of the intellectuals at the time. This demonstrates an aspect of their work in which a lack of fit between the intellectuals' ideas and the desires of the people could have been at odds. The role the intellectuals could potentially play in the development of ideology was already vulnerable in this early part of the period. Despite the weaknesses and problems they understood Arab nationalism to have, as will be discussed, it

had popularity and promise unmatched by the ideologies that they proposed. Arab nationalism was the one ideology in which almost all of the intellectuals put their hopes. The failure of 1967 led to the growth of multiple political ideologies that would manifest themselves within the many factions of the PLO. Thus, while 1967 did bring renewed opportunity for the more “underground” groups working towards Palestinian liberation, it also brought with it increased fracturing within the society. Even at this early stage, we can see the type of conflicts that would naturally occur, due to the support received from various Arab states, which not only made the factions political pawns in larger regional and global games, but would also become a point of great conflict for the factions themselves, as some of the regimes that supported them were the very ones that they wanted to overthrow.

For many of the intellectuals involved in resistance, the failed military action of the Arab world in the 1967 war, was reason enough to reduce their reliance on the military and ideological assistance of the Arab states. Furthermore, the growth of anti-colonialist guerrilla movements throughout the world, gave further reason to seek new, more independent paths for resistance. Despite these efforts, we have nonetheless seen the impact that external factors had on the intellectuals and their capacity to carry the resistance movement. Groups’ reliance on Arab states, despite those same groups’ desire for ideological independence, was problematic from the start. This was a balancing act that ultimately became too difficult for the leftist intellectuals, leaving the more pragmatic individuals and groups, such as Fatah and Arafat, to dominate the PLO. Additionally, initial attempts to develop ideology, including left-leaning ones, hinted at a lack of fit of the ideas they were bringing forth with the population. This is evident, for example, in the fragmentation in this early part of the period as well as in

the ultimate breakdown of the ANM. What did seem to have mass appeal, however, was the general message of armed resistance and Palestinian liberation. As Chamberlin explains, “to some observers, the nature of social revolution seemed to be changing as its pace quickened: the Cuban and Algerian experiences suggested the possibility of a new world of revolution built around the concept of urban guerrilla warfare rather than a mass proletarian uprising.”<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive*, 19.

### Chapter Three:

#### Paradigms for Understanding the “Age of Factionalisation”

*"Left to its own momentum, the Palestinian liberation struggle might have developed slowly.*

*Because of the defeat in June 1967, it grew in leaps."*<sup>1</sup>

Along with the Defeat, both armed struggle, globally, and larger systemic changes, regionally, had begun to show the Arab World, and intellectuals in particular, the significance of, and potentials for, establishing successful resistance. These intellectuals were aware of what post-June 1967 could hold for them, and knew that they must take advantage of it. Often it can take the passing of time to fossilise a period in history—in order for a society or group of people to understand its importance and relevance to the present. That is, however, not the case with the 1967–1974 period.<sup>2</sup> As Bilal al-Hassan writes in *Shu'un Filastiniya*, “even the ordinary citizen knew that the demands of Arab–Israeli confrontation required deep change in the economic, military, and political realities.”<sup>3</sup> Those involved in resistance during the period were acutely aware of what the time-period promised in terms of a potential for freeing the Palestinian

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<sup>1</sup> Fawwaz Trabulsi, "The Palestine Problem: Zionism and Imperialism in the Middle East," *New Left Review* 1 (1969): 86.

<sup>2</sup> In fact, if anything, the reverse takes place. While some swear by the seminal nature of the period, with its flourishing of thought and ideas, others are not as convinced. This will become apparent as we discuss Yasin al-Hafiz in this chapter as well as Fouad Ajami in Chapter Five.

<sup>3</sup> Bilal al-Hassan, "al-Fāhim al-Filastīnī li-hazīmat ḥuzayrān," [The Palestinian Understanding of the June Defeat] *Shu'un Filastīniyah*, no. 3 (1971): 5.



cause from the chains of Arab politics, and in freeing Arab society from these chains more generally. It must be noted, however, that others viewed the Defeat and what came as the end of radical thought and the beginning of a type of introspection on mistakes made in the previous period and on the direction the Resistance was taking. This, in the view of Samer Frangie, was the direction taken by Marxist intellectuals Yasin al-Hafiz. Frangie describes: "The loss of faith in the analytical tools inherited from the radical era translated politically in a loss of faith in the current anti-imperialist struggle, replaced by an inward critique of the culture and social structure of Arab societies."<sup>4</sup> Frangie refers to this reaction as a "historicist reaction."<sup>5</sup> For Nayif Hawatmeh, as will be discussed, the period was not necessarily the start of something new but the continuation of old tactics in a new setting. What I have found is two basic streams of intellectuals, those such as al-Azm and al-Hafiz, who turned inwards, and those who worked to form factions, such as Habash. Both streams, however, can be considered to be engaged in revolutionary efforts due to their desire to stir great change. The difference is that those who turned inward were critical of the leftist who worked to form these factions. These criticisms will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Following the failures of 1967, those forming factions had a chance to build something that reflected their own ideas and drew inspiration from contemporaneous movements. Additionally, they had gained the necessary respect to proceed with armed resistance. This was a key, defining factor of the time. The *fedayeen* resistance also provided hope of a truly revolutionary movement, one that "became the only moving theme in a big world that does not

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<sup>4</sup> Samer Frangie, "Historicism, Socialism and Liberalism after the Defeat: On the Political Thought of Yasin al-Hafiz," *Modern Intellectual History* 12, no. 2 (2015): 332–33.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

move.”<sup>6</sup> This comment about the “world that does not move,” demonstrates the challenge facing the Palestinian Resistance—unshifting regimes and a system that would likely not change. Such a large obstacle, requires equally large plans and strategies, as well as agreement around these plans and strategies. Within the PLO, the tension between those who saw the Palestinian struggle as far bigger than Palestine and those who were more focused on Palestinian liberation, remained. The former can be understood as seeking larger structural change, the latter, the creation of a kind of Palestinian nationalism.

Fanon’s division of national consciousness versus nationalism is a helpful way to understand the difference in these two approaches, with the former group comprising anti-colonial intellectuals and hoping to build an all-encompassing national consciousness. Fanon writes: “national consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension.”<sup>7</sup> Building the movement in a way that would allow for it to connect to the work of other movements was, in Fanon’s mind, key to its success. While nationalism can be understood as exclusive, national consciousness can be relevant globally, particularly to those countries working towards revolution—at a time when nationalism appeared to have failed many of them. Al-Hafiz, for example even used Fanon’s critique of nationalism and its tendency toward fascism, as a means to criticise what he saw as the petty bourgeoisie, seeing them as “a harbinger of reactionary and fascist thought.”<sup>8</sup> The general sentiment of leftist

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<sup>6</sup> al-Hassan, “al-Fāhim al-Filasṭīnī li-hazīmat ḥuzayrān,” 6.

<sup>7</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 247.

<sup>8</sup> Frangie, “Historicism, Socialism and Liberalism after the Defeat,” 330.

intellectuals was that Arab nationalism primarily served the petty bourgeoisie, as will be discussed further in this chapter.

In conceptualising anti-colonial struggles, Fanon pushed for complete separation from nationalism and, instead, the development of a national consciousness. By describing what national consciousness will *not* become, Fanon indirectly provides a definition of it: “instead of being the all-embracing crystallization of the innermost hopes of the whole people, instead of being the immediate and most obvious result of the mobilization of the people, national consciousness will be...a crude and fragile travesty of what it might have been.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, in part, he asserts that national consciousness will be constrained by the failures of colonised intellectuals. Conversely, when he refers to nationalism, he speaks of the political parties in the Third World that have attempted to change the colonial system, but whose rhetoric and efforts are either insincere or simply insufficient to create the momentum necessary to truly and wholly reject colonial systems. The 1967 defeat, provides a key example of this stalled-momentum. In nationalism, Fanon saw false promises and little potential for revolutionary change, “when the nationalist leaders *say* something, they make quite clear they do not really *think* it.”<sup>10</sup> This criticism of empty rhetoric is echoed in the sentiment of many of the intellectuals, such as al-Azm, who spends a considerable amount of time demonstrating how the overly-confident words of the Arab nationalists were proven to be so when they were met with a shameful defeat.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 148.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>11</sup> See for example: Sadik al-Azm, *Self-Criticism after the Defeat* (London: Saqi Books, 2011), 36.

In terms of the way nationalism was adopted by the PLO, Ran Greenstein, describes two distinct approaches:

The nationalist approach conceptualized the question of Palestine as a clash between indigenous Arabs seeking independence and foreign Jewish settlers...The solution therefore consisted in restoring the rights of the indigenous population by reversing the process of settlement and colonization. This should be carried out for the entire country or, if impossible, for a part of the country at least.<sup>12</sup>

By way of contrast, “the left-wing approach conceptualizes the question as a struggle for economic and territorial control between the global forces of imperialism and local populations.”<sup>13</sup> Given this, the left-wing intellectuals worked to connect their struggle ideologically, and in more concrete terms, to global resistance movements, while seeking to create something that would act to break down the structures of society. As we will see, efforts to eliminate the connection between nationalism and leftist ideology however, were not on the agenda for all factions and their leaders.

The “fall” of Arab regimes, or at least the fall of their presumed strength after June 1967, contributed to the rise of the PLO, even as tensions between, and within, groups remained high. More than merely an Arab defeat, the June war demonstrated the weaknesses of Arab nationalism as proposed by Nasserism and Ba’thism. For those who viewed these two movements as “predominantly the movements of the petit-bourgeoisie of the urban centres of

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<sup>12</sup> Ran Greenstein, *Zionism and its Discontents: A Century of Radical Discontent in Israel/Palestine* (London: Pluto Press, 2014), 106.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

the Middle East," the decline of their power and the potential opportunities for class-based resistance, was a welcomed change.<sup>14</sup> Among the intellectuals, there was a general ideological shift to the left. Historian Fawwaz Trabulsi, himself an activist in the 1960s and 1970s, perceives this shift in the following terms:

The defeat of June 1967 has spurred the process of disintegration of the Arab CP's [communist parties] and petit-bourgeois nationalism at the same time. The latter is highlighted by the splits inside the Arab Nationalist Movement, the only organized detachment of Nasserism. The ANM is now dissolved, leaving only Marxist-Leninist groups committed to a systematic and consistent anti-imperialist struggle in most of the countries of the Middle East, waged by the masses of workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals.<sup>15</sup>

Whether or not this actually happened is subject to debate. Regardless, Trabulsi captures how the intellectuals saw themselves—as writers of a revolution in action. Furthermore, he highlights their frustration with the leadership, perceived, by some, to be at risk of continuing the same type of rule of the wealthy and privileged, over the less fortunate within the region. This view was particularly evident amongst the Marxist-leaning intellectuals, whose concern from the start was both to plan a method for resistance and to account for the multiplicity of reasons as to why liberation was necessary. Beyond occupation, this included the necessity of a revolution for the workers and, in the case of Palestine, the *fedayeen*. Rhetoric, expressing their desire for the *fedayeen* to be at the heart of the struggle, was the closest intellectuals came to

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<sup>14</sup> Trabulsi, "The Palestine Problem," 78.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 88–89.

enacting a class-based resistance movement. In the particular context these intellectuals were working, this was perhaps the most straightforward way to approach some of the communist doctrines they admired, or at least discussed amongst themselves.

Factions' efforts at popular struggle versus conventional military efforts proved problematic to some on the left. Yasin al-Hafiz's view illuminates this Catch-22:

The historical experience of popular struggle has shown that the conventional war remains the goal of any non-conventional war, and the way to ensure a final and complete victory. The claim that the popular struggle is the only path has become, for some Arab regimes, a way to mask its fear of facing Israel and a revolutionary excuse to avoid the battle.<sup>16</sup>

While the leftist factions still engaged in armed struggle, we will see that its terms became the source of great debate. Aside from inter-factional competitions to carry out successful operations, the position of the PLO as a stateless entity weakened their capabilities, demonstrating their need for external support. At the same time, and to be discussed in detail in Chapter Four, many factions waged war on the Jordanian government, understanding it to be beholden to the imperialist powers and not willing to stand up to Israel. This attempt, as Quandt pointed out, ended in failure in large part because they did not have the necessary military capabilities, and Arab regimes were not willing to assist them.<sup>17</sup> In short al-Hafiz's

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<sup>16</sup> Quoted in: Frangie, "Historicism, Socialism and Liberalism after the Defeat," 333.

<sup>17</sup> William B. Quandt, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 25 September, 2017, phone interview.

observation, while not suggesting an alternative path, demonstrates the type of strategic conflicts that existed in their ideas for resistance.

Along with ideas regarding how to build resistance and an ideology of liberation, came disagreements as to which path was, in fact, correct. The different perspectives can be grouped loosely into paradigms, or models, that came to inform understandings of resistance and its relationship to the time period. Thus, this chapter focuses primarily on the ideas of the intellectuals who formed and participated in PLO factions. Their discussions added to the intellectual richness on display, while also contributing to discord between the diverse factions. These paradigms will be further discussed in this chapter, in an effort to illuminate the perceived options for resistance and the way in which intellectuals at the time criticised or praised certain streams of thought.

Differing views, coupled with complicated relations with external political actors, such as Jordan, made for a truly multifarious organisation. While there was general consensus as to the importance of the time period, it is difficult to identify many other shared points of agreement. Ideological disagreements contributed to splintering within the PLO, as well as fractured relationships with Arab states. According to al-Hout, following the Khartoum Summit of 29 August–1 September 1967, and al-Shuqeiry's resignation on 25 December 1967, "there followed a new phase in the history of the struggle that might be called 'the phase of factionalization'."<sup>18</sup> For all the positives generated by a multitude of understandings of resistance, there was a lack of clarity that often complicated the path towards it. In addition to

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<sup>18</sup> Shafiq al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO: The Inside Story of the Palestinian Struggle*, trans. Laila Uthmān and Hader Al-Hout (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 62.

diverse ideas regarding what resistance meant, were different views of what liberation would bring. For some factions, such as Fatah, the makeup of a Palestinian state would reveal itself as liberation unfolded. For others, a clear understanding of what liberation encompassed, needed to be clearly articulated from the start, in order to obtain their goals. Naturally, amongst the intellectuals, the same differences of opinion were on view. These diverse perspectives are manifest in the treatises, writings, and general opinions of the intellectuals, regarding how to carry out resistance and bring about liberation.

Building upon the discussion of the significance of the Defeat in Chapter Two, this chapter considers the outward expression of the intellectuals' response to 1967. While the factions and intellectuals had grand ideas for what was to come, I consider their initial steps to make these dreams a reality, as well as the factors that impeded their efforts. I explore how the groups responded to the 1967 war, how they interpreted it, and what kind of opportunities and organisational capacities they developed as a result. This, demonstrates how they perceived their roles as intellectuals during this unique time period, as well as the specific limitations to these roles that began to appear early on. This allows for an exploration of possible reasons for their changing roles, particularly as they relate to efforts to build the Resistance ideologically.

As I have expressed, by way of the explanatory variables, three major areas of concern are likely to arise—the intellectuals' own shortcomings in preparing and organising their movement; possible inconsistencies between the ideas they proposed and how well they fit the needs of the population; and external factors, which affected the ideological directions the intellectuals chose for their movement. With diverse plans for action, came arguments for why those plans were or were not viable. These disagreements and discussions came early in the



period, as indicated by al-Hout's factionalism comment. It was these disagreements that led to the development of factions and, arguably, to the confusion around processes for liberation. As a result, hopes for a consolidated resistance movement, as envisioned by thinkers like al-Shuqeiry, went unfulfilled. The discussions that the intellectuals had with one another, and the frustrations that they aired, point to an underlying desire for unity and clarity. In general, these discussions provide a sense of the type of social structures they hoped to see put in place.

The first section of this chapter will cover the historical significance of the period, as it relates to the formation of factions of the PLO. If the goal of the intellectuals was to promote, increase, and evolve thought, then it is necessary to understand the extent to which the period provided for this. Following this, I explore the ability of the intellectuals to structure their ideas into plans, in order to reach their goals. This will necessitate studying the paradigms, or formulae, that they developed in order to achieve liberation. The causes and effects of factionalisation will be examined, while discussing both the historical significance of, and paradigms for, resistance. I seek to understand the different approaches to resistance, by looking to the challenges and opportunities the times provided and the way that the intellectuals worked to both combat obstacles and take advantage of the challenges that lay before them. The first section, then, focuses on unique aspects of the early part of the time period that affected the work of key intellectuals. The second section focuses on reactions to the unfolding situation. Because factionalism is integral to understanding the complexities of this period, it is central to the chapter. Indeed, despite efforts to shift focus away from nationalism in order to develop national consciousness, unity remained beyond reach and factionalism prevailed.

## Historical Significance of Post-1967 Realities: The Period's Relationship to the Intellectuals

### *False Starts?*

Before discussing the importance of the period, it is necessary to bring to the forefront of the discussion, the hurdles and complications that initially challenged the Resistance, namely dissatisfaction with the leadership, as well as disunity among the factions of the PLO. Habash explains that the initial idea behind creating a group like the PFLP was to form an organisation akin to the FLN in Algeria.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, he states, "Fatah refused to band together with us...and that is what pushed us to form a front from four or five forces that were present in this period. The most important of them were Youth of Vengeance, Heroes of the Return, and the Palestinian Liberation Front."<sup>20</sup> He recounts that while early efforts by himself and Haddad, to create a united front, were successful, they were eventually "scolded by someone high up in the Palestinian Liberation Army, influenced by Ahmed al-Shuqeiry."<sup>21</sup> Al-Shuqeiry's position in the PLO, nonetheless, was soon diminished. Sayigh says of him, "Shuqayri [al-Shuqeiry] made

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<sup>19</sup> Habash clarifies that he was also not the only one in charge of the PFLP at the time of the group's establishment; others such as Ahmed Jibril also played a key role in establishing and directing the group. Ghassan Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad: Wadī'a Ḥaddād, Kārūs, Anīs al-Naqqāsh, Jūrj Ḥabash* [Secrets of the Black Box: Wadie Haddad, Carlos, Anis al-Naqqash, George Habash] (Beirut: Riad el-Rayyes Books, 2008), 369; furthermore, Dr. As'ad Abdul Rahman, who was one of the nine founding members of the PFLP, explained that it was Habash, Hadad, and al-Hindi who took the main roles in the group, and therefore were considered, with "pleasure," as the "a priori" founders. This is why, As'ad added, that Habash was elected as secretary general after the group's founding. As'ad Abdul-Rahman, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 26 May, 2016, phone interview.

<sup>20</sup> Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad*, 369. See also George Habash [Georges Habache] and Georges Malbrunot, *Les Révolutionnaires ne meurent jamais* [Revolutionaries never die] (Paris: Fayard, 2008), 68–69.

<sup>21</sup> Habash [Habache] and Malbrunot, *Les Révolutionnaires ne meurent jamais*, 68–69.

numerous enemies during his political career and was subsequently regarded by his Palestinian rivals as both bombastic and self-serving, but at this point in modern Palestinian history these characteristics proved beneficial.”<sup>22</sup> An example from al-Hout sheds light on how al-Shuqeiry’s character traits could have been to the benefit of the PLO. At an early Arab League Summit, al-Shuqeiry “was not permitted to use the same type of chair as the one allocated to the heads of states, and he was to be seated a certain distance behind them,” but “he pushed his chair forward until it came into line with the row of other seats, emphasizing his equal status and making the point that Palestine, even though it remained under occupation, was not to be regarded as in any way lesser than the other Arab countries.”<sup>23</sup> While al-Shuqeiry was strong in his assertions of Palestinian self-determination, his staying power was limited. Regardless, these early efforts at pushing the Palestinian cause arguably made strides for the development of the Palestinian cause.

Al-Azm recalls al-Shuqeiry’s limitations:

In my memory of those days, Shuqayri was never thought of as a leader of any sort but as [a] demagogic operative doing the bidding of the Saudis at the time (the bastion of Arab reaction according to the political jugements [sic] of those Nasserist days). After the defeat in 67 and the rise of the Fidaii resistance Fateh took over the moribund PLO and Shuqayri was set aside.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949–1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 96–97.

<sup>23</sup> al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO*, 51.

<sup>24</sup> Sadiq al-Azm, email message to author, 19 April 2016.

Others would agree with Al-Azm's assertion, seeing al-Shuqeiry, despite his intellectual capabilities, as unfit to lead the Palestinian Resistance. As'ad Abdul Rahman, who at the time of al-Shuqeiry's appointment was the president of the General Union of Palestine Students in Lebanon and the chairman of the Arab Student Federation in Beirut, states:

To us, at first, al-Shuqeiry was coming from above...He has always been...[an] Arab diplomat working for what we considered at the time as reactionary regimes...all of a sudden he popped out, as if he landed on us by a helicopter, supported later by [the] late President Jamal Abdel Nasser. And though we had lots of respect for Abdel Nasser at the time...to us Ahmed al-Shuqeiry came from [the] United Nations, from Saudi embassies...Yes, he gave great colour as an intellectual and a lawyer and a writer...but, to us, at the time, he was a reactionary, he was old fashioned.<sup>25</sup>

As'ad's use of the term "reactionary" is in accordance with the literature of the time, where it is used pejoratively as a way to describe a person, group, or government that chooses to react to a situation in a manner that reflects the status quo, in this case imperialism, and works to the benefit of that person (or group, or government) and oftentimes to the detriment of others.

The top-down approach to resistance was what the younger generation wanted to avoid. No longer wanting to entrust their will to a few wealthier landowners, who worked closely with governing authorities, the younger generation sought to inspire the masses through ideologies that were relevant both locally and globally. This, however, did not come without a cost, as can be seen in the constant competition of factions with one another, in

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<sup>25</sup> Abdul-Rahman, interview.

regards to the best approach to resistance. Nonetheless, some of al-Shuqeiry's methods, As'ad explains, were under-appreciated at the time. However, after 1967,

[P]eople started experiencing the pitfalls of the different Palestinian factions and their dangerous mistakes. Many started to be nostalgic about Ahmed Al-Shuqeiry because when he established the PLO...he did a marvellous job, in the sense of trying to build an organisation that...guarantees institutionalisation rather than personal dictatorship, though we used to accuse Ahmed al-Shuqeiry of being a dictator...at the time. But now, for example, and even under Arafat, we started realising...he established a structure of the PLO that guaranteed that no...dictator would emerge unless there is violation of the different rules and regulations.<sup>26</sup>

In December of 1967, Yahya Hammouda became the president of the PLO and remained in the role until 1969, when Arafat took charge. Fatah's role in the Battle of Karameh on 21 March 1968—in which Arafat was particularly prominent—and the absence of the PFLP, also helped the group to secure its preeminent position within the PLO.<sup>27</sup> As'ad points to another relevant issue of the time period: the desire for a change in leadership in order to create a more democratic political structure. This was a goal of the resistance that was largely shared across

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> See: Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 239, 241, 277. The battle took place when Habash was imprisoned in Syria Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad*, 370. The Battle of Karameh, fought between Israel on one side and the *fedayeen* and Jordan on the other, took place in Karameh, Jordan, where there were *fedayeen* camps that the Israeli Defense Forces hoped to destroy. While both sides claimed victory due to the achievement of their respective goals, for the Palestinian resistance groups, it was considered a turning point in their struggle, seeing it as their first victory against Israel after the 1967 war. See Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 258.

factions. Not only was the goal for a democratic Palestine, but it was for one state, that would unite all three Abrahamic faiths.<sup>28</sup>

Arafat's position would be the cause of frustration for many of the intellectuals involved in the Resistance. Although criticising the leadership is common in any such organisation, his methods of ruling as well as the concessions he would later make during negotiations, caused uproar, as will be discussed further in Chapter Five. The impression of Fatah, held by those outside the group, was compounded by growing dislike of Arafat. Habash's first meeting with Arafat was in 1967, after which he noted that the future leader of the PLO, "thinks more about himself than he thinks about his people." This negative impression did not change,<sup>29</sup> although Malbrunot added this subtlety: "Arafat was the father of the Palestinian cause, and Habash recognised that...It was a kind of...respect and animosity from a divergent position."<sup>30</sup> Others in the intellectual community shared Habash's tentative view, recognising Arafat's often difficult position as well as his work in making the Palestinian issue known globally. Others, like al-Azm, however, were more negative in their view of him, likely disagreeing with the overall direction in which he took the PLO.<sup>31</sup> To many of those within the Resistance community, Arafat's leadership stymied progress. It also stymied the type of resistance that those such as Kamal Nasser, Naji Alloush, and Sayigh intended to cultivate. The hopes that these intellectuals held

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<sup>28</sup> See Habash [Habache] and Malbrunot, *Les Révolutionnaires ne meurent jamais*, 300. The desire for an all-encompassing state could also be reflected, arguably, within the members of the PLO itself, as many active members, such as Habash, were Christian.

<sup>29</sup> Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad*, 370–71.

<sup>30</sup> Georges Malbrunot, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 25 August, 2016, Paris.

<sup>31</sup> Al-Azm, for example, was frank in his distaste for Arafat. Sadik al-Azm, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 5 January, 2016, Berlin. Obstacles the intellectuals faced due to Arafat will be discussed in Chapter Five.

for the Resistance will be discussed later in this chapter. The gap between the viewpoints of Fatah and other groups would widen, as conflicts between and within the groups grew.

### *The Rise of Leftist Thought*

For a certain portion of Palestinian intellectuals, new prospects for resistance included, by way of Marxism, the notion of class struggle. While Marxism was popular, and as As'ad noted, "everyone was Marxist at that time," certain factions and individuals took it more seriously than others.<sup>32</sup> However, the centrality of class struggle within Marxism, seemed to be lost on the Palestinian intellectuals. That is, beyond calls for mobilising the *fedayeen*, it was not something that they focused on building within their movement. The extent to which factions embraced the ideologies they claimed to embody, is one that will be discussed further in Chapter Five. While these ideas had been percolating in Palestinian intellectual circles since the mid-1950s, when the ANM was established, Hani Faris points out that the shift towards leftist thought is one of the defining features of 1967–1974.<sup>33</sup> As the ANM lost its strength and transformed itself into the PFLP, those within it became more polarised. This was in part due to the swift decline of Arab nationalism. As noted by Kazziha:

The secession of Syria in 1961 confirmed the significance of the socio-economic conditions in the development of the political situation in the Arab world.

Consequently Hawatima and Muhsin Ibrahim, together with their Lebanese comrades, who had come to similar theoretical conclusions on a purely intellectual level,

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<sup>32</sup> Abdul-Rahman, interview.

<sup>33</sup> Hani Faris, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 19 August, 2016, phone interview.

increasingly pushed the [Arab Nationalist] Movement to take a more radical stand. The inevitable result was an ideological clash between the old guard and the new generation, the militants—those who sought to preserve the unity of the Movement as a ‘unique experience’ in modern Arab history and those who were more inclined to merge with other Nasirite groups. In short it was a crisis of a nationalist movement tormented by its inability to be transformed en bloc into a Marxist-Leninist party.<sup>34</sup>

The ANM eventually dissolved, due to the Defeat and local issues that came to occupy various individual branches of the organisation.<sup>35</sup>

Kazziha's use of “old guard’ and “new guard’ contrasts with the way in which I have used these terms. Rather than referring to the “old guard” as the older Palestinian families, such as the al-Husseini family, Kazziha attaches the term to those who aligned themselves with Nasser, such as Habash. Given this, the “new guard,” in Kazziha’s thinking, are those who rejected Arab nationalist ideology as proposed by Nasserism and Ba’thism and the reality imposed by major Arab leaders of the time. Some examples of this “new guard” are Hawatmeh and Ahmed Jibril, both of whom who split from the PFLP in 1969. The priorities of the “new guard,” show that, for some Palestinian intellectuals in the 1960s, resistance meant opposition, not just to occupation, but also to the social structures of the past. This necessitated criticism of certain outlooks and traditions, which in their minds, was reflected in their unsuccessful way of fighting Israel: from the misunderstanding of the presence of women on the battlefield, to the lack of a strong,

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<sup>34</sup> Walid Kazziha, *Revolutionary Transformation in the Arab World: Habash and His Comrades from Nationalism to Marxism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975), 80–81.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.; and Abdul-Rahman, interview.



technical effort in resistance and warfare. A lack of unity amongst Arab states was also criticised anew. This is evident in the expressed desire to move away from nationalism and embrace alternative collectivities. However, nationalism still played a part in shaping the PLO, during this period.

A number of key intellectuals, including Kamal Nasser, Alloush, Sayigh, Habash, and Hawatmeh, were critical of Fatah's failure to urge the Resistance forward to new realities through seeking fundamental societal changes. Still, there was no general consensus as to how these changes would be enacted or, indeed, the broader direction of the Resistance.

Habash explains that when re-thinking Palestinian resistance and the failure of Nasser after June 1967, it was important to recall the necessity of democracy, "and that, in the face of certain fringes of the bourgeoisie that tried to recover power, we must orient ourselves towards an ideology that favours the working class. That would be our first step towards a socialist doctrine that we adopted soon after."<sup>36</sup> Nasser had often been accused, by the left, of mainly supporting the petty bourgeoisie.<sup>37</sup> Regardless of the validity of this, it was a point that Habash claimed he now had to address. Hawatmeh was even more disappointed than Habash with the direction of Nasserism and their answer to the problem of the Defeat was more definitive. Kazzuha notes that the 1967 defeat helped to bring certain groups closer together, stating, "on the one hand, the left increasingly realized that, after all, Nasserism did not form the magical solution for the crisis of the national movement in the Arab world, while Habash

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<sup>36</sup> Kazzuha, *Revolutionary Transformation in the Arab World*, 85.

<sup>37</sup> Habash [Habache] and Malbrunot, *Les Révolutionnaires ne meurent jamais*, 68.

and his colleagues had experienced a significant shift toward Marxist thought since 1964."<sup>38</sup>

This unity, however, was not absolute, and while a large portion of the intellectuals shifted further to the left than Nasser, disagreements within their ranks, as well as varying understandings of what a post-1967 reality would look like, fractured the PLO.

Hawatmeh, Habash, and Jibril were all more devoted to bringing socialist and Marxist realities to the resistance. Nonetheless, they differed in their approaches, ultimately leading Hawatmeh to establish his own faction, the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), in 1969. Around the same time Jibril, who had helped to form the Palestine Liberation Front, established the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC). As we will see, these groups worked to bring socio-economic concerns to the fore than Fatah, which, while concerned to some degree with this subject, focused more on armed struggle and resistance as a means to regain territory.

### *Armed Struggle: An Agreed Aim Lacking United Action*

As noted by Alloush, a thinker, poet, and member of Fatah:<sup>39</sup> if the early 1960s were spent increasing the visibility of the Palestinian cause, the late 1960s were spent solidifying and further developing the cause.<sup>40</sup> Armed struggle remained at the heart of discussions regarding how to resist, and most remained dedicated to it. While it became an agreed-upon and widely-used tactic, it quickly became clear to some, that armed resistance would not only rise in

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<sup>38</sup> Kazziha, *Revolutionary Transformation in the Arab World*, 85.

<sup>39</sup> Alloush split from Fatah, and formed his own faction, in the 1980s due to discrepancies of opinion he had with the group.

<sup>40</sup> Naji Alloush, *Fikr ḥarakat al-muqāwamat al-Filasṭīniyah (1948–1987): naẓrah 'aāmah* [Thoughts on the Palestinian National Movement 1948–1987: General Views] (Bīr Zayt: Lajnat Turāth Bīr Zayt, 1993), 35.

prominence and popularity, it would also overtake other needed elements of resistance, such as a clear ideology and an understanding of how to execute armed struggle and to what ends. This became one of the primary grievances of some of the intellectuals of the time, such as A.W. Said, of the Iraqi-supported Arab Liberation Front and Kamal Nasser. It was the vagueness of the program, that led many intellectuals to criticise certain factions and to doubt the allegiances of certain individuals and factions to the larger cause of liberation: that of reforming Arab society. Armed struggle would continue to create contention within the Resistance, yet would become a defining element of the period.

Although the use of armed struggle by Palestinian factions began in 1964, implementing it within a post-1967 reality, within the context of a “united” PLO, was a different matter. Quite apart from disagreements, as to the extent to which armed struggle should feature in plans for resistance, the factions, well aware of the importance of timing, were working together to decide on an appropriate date for armed struggle to begin, just after June 1967.<sup>41</sup> Working collectively towards this, revealed some of the challenges of the period for the intellectuals and the Resistance more generally. These challenges included trying to work towards unification, despite the obstacles posed by the politics of the time (for example, the gap between what political leaders had to say during the Khartoum Summit, and what they actually did); establishing some common goals for the Resistance, something which persistently proved to cause difficulties; and maintaining the impact of resistance over time. By mid-July of 1967, Fatah and the ANM were holding meetings together—“attended chiefly by Habash, Haddad,

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<sup>41</sup> Habash [Habache] and Malbrunot, *Les Révolutionnaires ne meurent jamais*, 69.

and Usama al-Naqib from the ANM and by Arafat and Wazir from Fatah”—in regards to the 1967 war and in order to outline “prospects for an uprising.”<sup>42</sup> This “ended with a commitment by both sides to accumulate recruits and weapons,” as well as an agreement to continue the conversation of when armed struggle would ensue. These discussions, however, ended on 28 August, when Fatah announced that combat would begin.<sup>43</sup> According to Sayigh, “Arafat had brought the date agreed with the Fatah higher central committee forward by three days in order to impress the Arab heads of state assembling in...Khartum for an emergency summit conference,” during which the famous “three no’s”—no peace with Israel, no recognition of Israel, and no negotiations with Israel—were established.<sup>44</sup> This move bruised the relationship between Fatah and the PFLP and, one could argue, set a tone of mistrust between them. Compared to many other guerrilla resistance groups working around the same time, the PLO simply lacked unity. While the FLN, for example, suffered much fracturing within the organisation, it was able to be held together, at least until the goal of Algerian independence was achieved.<sup>45</sup>

According to Fatah, “organised relatively large-scale resistance” began on 29 August 1967. Although the group claimed that “it was possible to postpone” the start of armed struggle for a few weeks, they gave the following justification:

First of all, it was not sound from the political, military, or psychological angles to immobilise the organisations and fighting forces after we had reached such a degree of

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<sup>42</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 161.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> See William H. Lewis, “The Decline of Algeria’s FLN,” *Middle East Journal* 20, no. 2 (1966): 163–65.

training, organisation and armament. Secondly, immobilisation would have exposed us to greater danger. Thirdly, the enemy had begun to be aware and to molest some of our secret bases. Accordingly we decided to strike to avoid being taken by surprise in the event of a counter-attack by the enemy. We actually began and Fateh remained alone in the field, carrying out armed resistance, until December 1967, when some of our brothers of the Popular Front joined us in the struggle from the first half of January 1968. Thereafter the operation continued, and small organisations were formed one after the other until we reached the situation which I have already described [in-fighting]. These are the main points concerning the formation of Fateh as well as its thinking and action, within publishable limits.<sup>46</sup>

While Fatah understood its choice as one of sacrifice for the sake of defending Palestinian land before it was too late, the PFLP, and Habash in particular, perceived it as one of selfishness that worked to give Fatah an advantage. For example, Habash stated:

This solitary initiative of Fatah's had a negative influence on Palestinian action. It confirmed Fatah's stranglehold on the PLO and harmed the unity that we knew to be indispensable to victory. That's why in my opinion Fatah carries the responsibility for the fissure caused in the Palestinian ranks during this period. Its coming about allowed Israel to weaken us in quick response to armed action that started in Palestine. We could and had to organise on more solid bases.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Fatah, *A Dialogue with Fateh* (n.p.: Palestinian National Movement [Fatah], 1969), 41–42. As stated in the book, this is a reprint of an interview between *al-Tali'a* [*al-Ṭalī'a*] magazine and Fatah, printed in the magazine in the second quarter of 1969.

<sup>47</sup> Habash [Habache] and Malbrunot, *Les Révolutionnaires ne meurent jamais*, 70.

These opposing views, demonstrate the differences in perception of how to handle and organise resistance. It accounts for some of the discord that began to manifest between the factions. The PFLP's second-place position came with the constant competition of announcing and executing armed operations, in which Haddad had a main role.<sup>48</sup> This is an example of the rivalries between factions of the period. For example, within the PFLP's *al-Hadaf* (The Target), the competition between factions is palpable; armed operations were announced with great pride, and calls were made for clarification and evidence as to which group carried out which operation.<sup>49</sup>

While the PFLP was working to build its ideology, Fatah understood its own participation in resistance differently, seeing its role as a pioneer in armed struggle, as essential for the success and liberation of Palestinians.<sup>50</sup> The faction's focus, perhaps more than others, became centred on armed struggle. This was one of the greatest criticisms made by intellectuals such as Kamal Nasser and Naji Alloush, who also had been involved at some points with Fatah and with the PLO more generally, both of whom saw a necessity in exploring the various possibilities—socially and culturally—for Palestinian resistance and liberation. While Habash alludes to the idea that Fatah's actions demonstrated the group's willingness to act against unity, its literature implies the opposite. In *Dialogue with Fateh*, a 1969 discussion between *Al-Tali'a* (*Vanguard*) magazine and Fatah, a Fatah representative notes:

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<sup>48</sup> Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad*, 380.

<sup>49</sup> For example al-Jabhah al-Sha'bīyah li-Taḥrīr Filasṭīn (PFLP), "Rijāl al-jabhat al-sha'bīyah yensifūn 4 ahdāf fī Ramallah wa-Haifa wal-'Afūla wa-Lod: al-da'wah li-Inḥa' al-tedarrub fīl bayānāt wa-tashkīl lajnat taḥqīq" [Popular Front Men Blow Up 4 Targets in Ramallah, Haifa, Afula, and Lod: call to end announcement practices and form a commission of inquiry]. *al-Hadaf*, 2 August 1969.

<sup>50</sup> See, for example Fatah, *A Dialogue with Fateh*, 30.

As regards the PFLP, we constantly hold discussions with it, and we on our part will not stop this discussion. It was we who first began the discussion before the PFLP was split resulting in the separation of the National Liberation Front, known as Ahmed Jibril's group, from the PFLP. The intellectual developments took place within the PFLP which split further into two divisions, the one declaring itself to be Marxist-Leninist under the leadership of *Al-Hurriah* magazine group and Nayef Hawatmeh and calling itself the Democratic Popular Front, and the other advocating Marxism under the leadership of Dr. George Habash, but their method of action is different from that of others. These circumstances of division within the PFLP constantly hampered our discussions. Instead of trying to talk the PFLP into entering the frame of the unity of Palestinian action, we had to talk them into restoring talks among themselves first.<sup>51</sup>

Although in the above quotation Fatah does not directly address armed struggle, in regards to acting singularly, it turns the conversation around, suggesting that the PFLP's inner conflicts are what cause disunity in the resistance and restating that Fatah is maintaining the PLO's unified status. Aside from these initial internal challenges to the PLO, intellectuals took issue with the choices being taken on Palestine, by Arab heads of state. This was evident at the conclusion of the Khartoum Summit and in the dispute that arose between some of the factions and the Hashemite Kingdom.

More than resenting Fatah's decision to enter into armed struggle, of its own volition, Hawatmeh finds a contradiction with the very idea of "Palestinian" resistance. To him, it is

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 15–16.

impossible for it to exist on its own, because of the strength of Israel and its support from the West. He explains that “the notion that the Palestinian people alone can defeat the combined forces of Israel and imperialism is an unrealistic one; unless this is realized, we will be sinking into a series of utopian illusions or demagogic proselytism among the ranks of our people and the peoples of the area.”<sup>52</sup> Hawatmeh’s statement recalls what was said by Kamal Nasser regarding the near impossibility of the Palestinians being able to liberate Palestine when they are such a small group. It is fair to say that, for Hawatmeh, this is the limitation of the Palestinian Resistance in general in the 1960s and 1970s. Nonetheless, certain Resistance members such as Faris and al-Hout found the period to be the best time for the development of Palestinian-led resistance. These differences in perception of what on what needed to be an agreed framework for resistance, complicated the path towards liberation, causing the Resistance to question its trajectory as early as 1969.

Hawatmeh also found Fatah’s early moves to be out of step with the general consensus on how resistance should be conducted. For him, the period began with the potential for revolutionary change, but the results of actions by the Resistance, soon proved otherwise. He notes the following:

Instead of...rejuvenating the ties of the Arab nationalist movement with the Arab liberation movement through a revolutionary platform, Fateh developed isolationist characteristics which rested upon the principle of ‘Palestinizing’ the Palestinian question and turning one’s back on the surrounding Arab countries. Hence the

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<sup>52</sup> Quoted in: Clovis Maksoud, *Palestine Lives: Interviews with Leaders of the Resistance* (Beirut: Palestine Research Center, Kuwaiti Teachers Association, 1973), 84.



resistance movement, from the start, carried within itself the fault which led to its characteristic attitude toward the status quo.<sup>53</sup>

To Hawatmeh—himself technically Jordanian—not recognising that the Palestinian question was too great to be tackled without the involvement of other Arab nations, was a mistake. This can be considered a potential shortcoming of the intellectuals—a lack in conceptualising the complete needs of their struggle. At the time, many of the factions’ publications lauded a Palestinian-led resistance, largely disconnected from the wider Arab efforts, perceiving this as a wise strategic move. As will be discussed in the next two chapters, this was a position, for example taken by Fatah, who maintained a stance of non-intervention into states’ affairs. Hawatmeh’s critical perspective and the way this conflicted with al-Hout’s position, for example, highlights another challenge that presented itself to the Resistance—coming to terms with not only the death of any effort at Arab unity, but also the impasse and falsity of liberation by Palestinian hands only. This sentiment—highlighting the external variable of this thesis—is implied by others as well. The political decisions of Arab leaders, likewise, reflected the blurred line between support and indifference from regional governments.

#### The Khartoum Summit and Resolution 242: the fourth “no”

The decisions made at the Khartoum Summit of 1967, set out some of the basic principles of Palestinian Resistance in the subsequent period. Despite the presence of Arab leaders and their willingness to accept the three no’s of the Summit, some had other plans in mind. While Nasser and King Hussein may have publicly agreed to the three no’s, Sayigh notes

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 85.

that they “had come privately to the conclusion that ‘Israel was there to stay’.” To Sayigh, this became clear through the two leaders’ acceptance of Resolution 242, “which called for Israeli withdrawal in return for recognition of the right of all states in the region effectively including Israel to live in peace and security,” in November of 1967. It recognised Palestinians only as refugees. Nasser, nonetheless, would still not give up entirely on military efforts against Israel.<sup>54</sup> This was evident, in part, through Egypt’s funding and support of Palestinian factions that now made up the PLO, such as Fatah.

There was a fourth no, which al-Shuqeiry announced in a press conference immediately following the conference: “no unilateral acceptance by any Arab state of a solution for the Palestine question. Such a solution should be subject to discussion at high-level Arab meetings, which should and must include the Palestine Liberation Organization.”<sup>55</sup> The exclusion of this fourth no from the no’s of the Khartoum conference, elided a key point within the discussion of resistance—Arab unity. Shuqeiry’s dedication to the principles of the conference was something that others respected and held dear as well, especially given later changes in Palestinian resistance tactics. In an allusion to what was to come, As’ad recalls: “The fact that Shuqeiry passed away before entering the world of political compromises made many honour him with that and say that he was faithful to the slogan that he had created: No negotiation...we remembered that he was behind the slogan that emerged from the Arab Summit [in Khartoum].”<sup>56</sup> While trust in Arab nationalism had declined since 1967, there was still emphasis, even among Palestinian factions, on the importance of Arab unity. There was an

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<sup>54</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 143.

<sup>55</sup> al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO*, 61.

<sup>56</sup> Abdul-Rahman, interview.

understanding of the necessity of Arab leaders to respect the importance of the centrality of the Palestinian issue when addressing any issues concerning Israel. Furthermore, from the intellectuals' perspective it was essential that Palestinian leaders themselves honour the values—including armed struggle—established at this conference.

In this case, there were two forms of disunity taking place, the first internal to the PLO, and the second within the wider Arab political sphere. Not only was this expressed by some factions' discontent at armed struggle but also, for example, in the Arab political community's handling of the UN Security Council Resolution 242 and the Khartoum Summit. Al-Hout points out that the three no's,

Were...compromised by the goals that the Arab regimes agreed upon, which were the elimination of the consequences of the Israeli aggression and the liberation of the 'recently occupied Arab territories.' This was the first official indication in Arabic of an indirect and implicit recognition of Israel's existence in the Palestinian territories occupied in 1948.<sup>57</sup>

It did not take long for some in the intellectual community to realise that there was a divide between the Palestinian Resistance's assumptions of how to react to 1967, and those of Arab leaders. To many in the Resistance, it seemed obvious that they should not accept Resolution 242. As al-Hout pointed out in his 1967 article in *al-Muharrir*, "there is no doubt after Arab officials announced their acceptance of the UN resolution at the same time that the Palestinians rejected it, that it became necessary, even inevitable, for Palestinians to precede

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<sup>57</sup> al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO*, 61.

the Arab summit with a summit for Palestinians.”<sup>58</sup> The need for a separate summit signifies the growing disapproval amongst the Resistance community, of Arab reaction to the defeat.

While some criticised Arab leaders’ response to Resolution 242, others criticised that of the Palestinian intellectual community. Kamal Nasser notes that in Ramallah amongst a group of intellectuals just after Resolution 242 was announced, “the eternal traditional discussion was continuing: *When will the Zionists leave? And how? And on what basis and conditions?*”<sup>59</sup> Nasser’s frustration was in large part due to the timing of their discussion. He notes, “in the midst of the joy of the [Israeli] withdrawal they did not meditate, not even these intellectuals, on the text and wording.”<sup>60</sup> Despite Nasser’s lament at the myopic view of this group, he recognised that even those who “did not lose their ability to think properly” had no chance, “because they understood the nature of Zionist expansionism, and because they knew that the game would begin again.”<sup>61</sup> Nasser then concludes, largely as al-Hout does, by focusing on Palestinian agency in combating occupation, “we return to ourselves, and to our intellect: to a handful of revolutionaries we plan how we will resist occupation and how we understand the Israeli mind in order to fight it.”<sup>62</sup> Nasser’s comment expresses his scepticism. He points out that the group willing to fight was a small minority, especially in comparison to the growing strength of the Israelis. While Kamal Nasser and al-Hout were both prepared to remain steadfast in a policy of armed struggle, they recognised that a large group, strong and unified,

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<sup>58</sup> “Qabla mu’atamar al-qīmat al-‘Arabī: maṭlūb mu’atamar qimah lil-Filasṭīniyīn” [Before the Arab Summit Conference: A Summit Conference for Palestinians Demanded] *al-Muḥarrir*, 27 November 1968.

<sup>59</sup> Kamal Nasser, *Kamāl Nāṣir: al-athār al-nathrīyah* [Kamal Nasser: Literary Works] (Beirut: al-Mu’asasah al-‘Arabīyah lil-Dirāsāt wal-Nashr, 1974), 267.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 268.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

was the only hope for this to work. Al-Hout states this directly, while Nasser implies it, describing the split between intellectuals in their thinking on Resolution 242, as well as in describing the large task that a small group of revolutionaries would take on, in trying to defeat an entity which successfully secured four territories in six days and held on to them for years.<sup>63</sup> Trabulsi, echoes Kamal Nasser's hesitation, acknowledging the capabilities of the Zionists, while doubting the ability of the Palestinians given the smallness of the Resistance movement.

What is termed the Arab Revolution is *potentially* a combination of two relatively autonomous, yet dialectically interrelated struggles: the anti-imperialist class struggle and the anti-Zionist struggle. Neither can be deferred to await the outcome of the other. Neither is a substitute for the other. The question is a strategic one: which link in the Zionist-imperialist chain in the Middle East is likely to be the first to break? *The Zionist state is not likely to be the weakest link in this chain under the prevailing conditions in the area.* Furthermore, the forces of the Palestinian people are not by themselves strong enough to break it, if by this is meant defeating also the imperialist powers that sustain the state of Israel<sup>64</sup>

Aside from foreshadowing the dark days with the Jordanian Hashemite Kingdom, Trabulsi sees armed struggle being effective if, and only if, the Resistance aligns itself more clearly with the larger anti-imperialist struggle taking place globally. The two interrelated struggles raised by Trabulsi, the anti-imperialist cause and the anti-Zionist cause, demonstrated two of the great hurdles of the PLO—creating unity in political commitment and creating the prototype

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<sup>63</sup> Egypt took back the Sinai Peninsula in 1973. In 2005, Israel withdrew from the Gaza Strip.

<sup>64</sup> Trabulsi, "The Palestine Problem," 88.

revolutionary. This is also reflected in Fanon's understanding of the colonised intellectuals and their struggle to build a national consciousness, in which recognition of a wider, global struggle, separate from nationalism, was necessary.

#### *Limitations: Opposing Views on Historical Significance*

Some saw the period as an opportunity for a genuine revolutionary struggle, that was squandered in the mistakes made by the Resistance. However, for Hawatmeh, the period was not necessarily the start of something new but the continuation of old tactics in a new setting. The Resistance was defined by the maintenance of the status quo, encouraged by Fatah's poor leadership. In this case, the status quo was the false pretence of a Palestinian struggle that could successfully lead Palestinians to liberation, as well as the type of military tactics that Fatah and other factions had been attempting since before the 1967 war. This is also what Kamal Nasser was referring to, when he discussed his frustration at the quality of conversation taking place after the announcement of Resolution 242. There is a clear difference between those who saw the period as a hotbed of new ideas and renewed efforts for a pure fight, and those who were frustrated and regarded the new efforts as both misleading and insufficiently revolutionary. It is reasonable to conclude that both contain some validity, as is evident in, for example, the growth of organisations at the time,<sup>65</sup> and in the lack of clarity in the progress made by each faction.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> As pointed out by Faris in our interview.

<sup>66</sup> Faction journals often contain announcements of "successful" armed operations, but the extent to which these operations had a lasting positive impact on goals towards liberation is unclear.

## **“The Movement of Doctors” at Work: The Intellectuals’ Relationship to the Period**

Along with understanding the historical significance of the time, even while it was unfolding, elements of the Resistance were quick to question and criticise what they perceived as errors made along the way. This characteristic of the period supports the idea of it being a type of “renaissance,” as some involved prefer to see it. Despite mistakes and differences in ideology, at the very least, those involved were willing to admit their own failures, as well as address the problems created by the Resistance, problems that they believed posed obstacles to the ultimate goal of liberation. The documents of the period are evidence of these critical discussions. Articles, calls to battle, and interviews tend to address the mistakes made, as well as possible solutions. The danger in such discussions lay in an inability to move beyond criticism and towards a viable plan for resistance. A framework that would incorporate, as much as possible, the most feasible of the suggested solutions, was either impossible or so difficult to achieve that it simply did not come to fruition. On top of that, as discussed in the previous section, there were external factors at play—resistance from Arab leaders, for example—which would always be the thorn in the Resistance’s side. This section will explore some of the main paradigms that existed at the time, with the intention of consolidating the views that emerged, and elucidating the importance and diversity of the intellectuals’ work. In doing so, it highlights the role of the intellectuals as both thinkers and revolutionaries.

### *Diverse Visions of what the Period Could Be*

While Arab leaders were making their own plans based on their political interests, the Resistance continued with plans and discussions for change. Faris describes that along with a

heightened focus on Palestinian issues, there was “a breakdown of traditional lines of authority,” evident in the many factions and organisations of the period. These groups differed in regards to which paradigms they saw as the correct way to understand Palestinian resistance. For many, this period not only began with the potential for united resistance, it also held the promise of a political, cultural, and social renaissance. Some think that not only was it promised, but that it in fact occurred. Anis Sayigh, who ran the Palestine Research Center (PRC), describes the period in his memoir, in such a way as to give the impression that it was a renaissance.<sup>67</sup> This was also evident in the magazine published by the PRC, *Shu’un Filastiniya*, which featured articles from many of the thinkers of the time, as well as documentation of the discussions that took place between intellectuals. Faris describes the period as being “a total breakdown of traditional modes of thinking and the emergence of a very vibrant intellectual movement...to the extent that the Israelis used to call the resistance movement the movement of doctors.”<sup>68</sup> More than just being a movement of well-educated people, those involved worked to devise plans of action, be it militant, political, or ideological.

For some, politics and ideology were one and the same. Malbrunot noted, of Habash: “He was not corrupted, he was a pure guy...and loyal to his ideas.”<sup>69</sup> This mindset remained constant for people like Habash, to the extent that the final interviews at the end of his life reflect his continued persistence in reaching liberation through Marxist means. The intellectuals’ unwavering sense of their role as leaders of the Palestinian Resistance and writers

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<sup>67</sup> Anis Sayigh, *Anīs Ṣāyigh ‘an Anīs Ṣāyigh* [Anis Sayigh on Anis Sayigh] (Beirut: Riyad El Rayyes, 2006). See pages 245–247, for example, which highlights efforts and increased financial means to publish, translate, and distribute materials, particularly in the early 1970s.

<sup>68</sup> Faris, interview.

<sup>69</sup> Malbrunot, interview.



of it, sets them apart from others involved in the PLO at the time, such as Arafat. Arafat was arguably more willing to concede to certain terms, as will become clearer when the later years of this period are discussed in more detail. Thus, along with the intellectual atmosphere of the period came the intellectual dedication, or *iltizam* (commitment) from the intellectuals.

Trabulsi made the following comment in 1969, when discussing the tasks of members of the Resistance:

The task of revolutionaries in the Middle East is to bring the workers and peasants into the political arena under their own ideology and slogans. This can only be achieved by forging the theoretical and organizational tools for the accomplishment of this great historic mission. In the process, the Great Alliance will be consolidated between the two detachments of the Arab revolution: the armed organizations of the Palestinian people and the proletarian vanguards of the Arab masses. On this victory depends.<sup>70</sup>

For Trabulsi, the role of the revolutionary is to be an intellectual. He sees this, as the only sure way to reach clear understandings of what must be accomplished and to create clear goals that will lead the Resistance towards liberation from Israeli occupation and also from imperialism and bourgeoisie leadership. Whether this would happen was not clear.

Some involved in the Resistance, were critical of the extent to which the period sustained a successful intellectual movement. While Alloush claims that the most important

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<sup>70</sup> Trabulsi, "The Palestine Problem," 89.

discussions of resistance thought took place between 1967 and 1974,<sup>71</sup> he maintains that because of factionalism during this period, controversial studies and intellectual dialogue were not supported.<sup>72</sup> His point alludes to the idea that the period could have been more than what he perceived it became, a large effort at armed struggle. Furthermore, Alloush reflects the position of Kamal Nasser, and his frustration at some in the intellectual community who, he thought, were unable to discuss recent events with innovation and renewed perceptions of Palestinian reality. To Alloush, it was only *Shu'un Filastiniya* that fostered the kind of intellectual growth that would nurture Palestinian resistance—in contrast to the relentless focus on armed struggle, ubiquitous in the publications of other factions.

Aimless armed struggle was a danger that Alloush and Kamal Nasser hoped to avoid. What they pushed for, was a richer intellectual environment that would act to challenge the status quo through dialogue—both spoken and written. Others, such as Faris, argued that such dialogue was already happening, as evident through the dozens of figures focusing on Palestinian resistance during that time. However, he did single out al-Hout, stating: “He was the head of the PLO office in Beirut...For a long, long time, he represented the PLO, and what he had to contribute was primarily a classical thought, standard thought, nationalist thought...that’s the limitations.”<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> According to Alloush, this period lies within the broader period of 1964–1987, which he sees as the period in which Palestinians develop political thought. Alloush, *Fikr ḥarakat al-muqāwamat al-Filasṭīniyah*, 34.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>73</sup> Faris, interview.

Along with the focus on armed struggle, it was this limited thinking, dominant within the upper ranks of the PLO, which frustrated those such as Nasser, Alloush, and Hawatmeh. Nonetheless, Faris remarks that “what makes it as a landmark period is the fact that all these schools coexisted. They all had a voice and the means to express their thought.”<sup>74</sup> This characteristic of welcoming all streams of thought in an effort to reach Palestinian liberation, is also noted by Anis Sayigh in the first issue of *Shu’un Filastiniya*.<sup>75</sup> What some lamented, at the same time, was that the expression of thought came at the price of the loss of a substantive plan to achieve liberation, as well as a clear articulation of what a liberated Palestine would be, for its inhabitants. In other words, to what extent could each figure understand the others’ perspectives and work together to create a cohesive movement? Without a state, the flourishing of diverse ideas would need to be carefully paired with consensus on common goals, as well as agreement on how to correctly involve the public in the revolutionary fight. Some found that the masses were not being involved to the full extent they perceived necessary, in large part due to in-fighting. A. W. Said of the Arab Liberation Front explains: “The problem is that the diversity became transformed into distorted and harmful rivalry which led the groups to engage in dubious practices for political gain. Much effort was expended in such activity, instead of in confronting the enemy, mobilising the masses, and increasing the capabilities of the resistance.”<sup>76</sup>

*Mass Action—What the Intellectuals Hoped for and what was Achieved*

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Anis Sayigh, “Shu’un Filastīniyah,” *Shu’un Filastīniyah*, no. 1 (1971).

<sup>76</sup> A. Said in Maksoud, *Palestine Lives*, 142.

In the spirit of the times, all factions in the PLO hoped to rely on the support of the masses. For some factions, this would take shape through a proletarian struggle, that would put to rest the colonial nature of the region's past. Being, traditionally, a largely agrarian society, this proletarian struggle was particularly relevant to Palestine. Furthermore, given the background of the new generation of intellectuals—that is, not being from the elite classes—such an idea proved particularly compelling. Nonetheless, the extent to which the masses were mobilised is subject to debate even now, just as it was during 1967–1974.

In 1973, the PFLP issued the following statement, warning against military action that lacked the support of the masses:

Revolutionary violence—military action—should not appear in our confrontation with the enemy and its plans as an alternative to the mass movement. Such an alternative would lead us to conceive, analyze, and plan the battle in purely military terms, i.e. to evaluate all the problems and possibilities (including the balance of forces) militarily. Revolutionary violence and military activity must be the crowning of the mass movement and not an alternative to it.<sup>77</sup>

The extent to which they followed through with this statement is subject to debate, particularly given the criticisms of others. Nonetheless, when Malbrunot—who interviewed Habash during the last months of his life—was asked if he thought there was a disparity between what Habash *said* regarding supporting the *fedayeen* and his actual efforts towards them, Malbrunot—an

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<sup>77</sup> PFLP, "P.F.L.P. Bulletin," (Beirut: Foreign Relations Committee of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, 1973), 1. This source as well as all others from La Contemporaine library in Paris are examples of the many pamphlets which the leftist factions distributed to the public domestically and internationally.

outsider to the Palestinian Resistance—described Habash as “close to his people” and “not a fighter in the five-star hotels.”<sup>78</sup> Others were frustrated at the lack of coherent mobilisation of the masses, citing inconsistent planning among factions as well as a failure to clearly disseminate that information to the general public. Regardless of the overall effectiveness of efforts at mass mobilisation at that time, the notion that the intellectuals lived above and disconnected from Palestinians during this period was not necessarily the case. As pointed out by Malbrunot (speaking in relation to Habash), these individuals did not live above others and had strong connections to people across the Resistance movement.<sup>79</sup> This is also evident in the support given to the factions by the general public.<sup>80</sup> From these descriptions, we gain a better sense of how the intellectuals of this period relate to the organic intellectual as it is described by Gramsci. Their significance goes far beyond that of the traditional intellectuals, who worked to cultivate their relationships with ruling parties and the upper echelons of society.

Despite being not entirely disconnected from the Palestinian public, by 1973, the struggle seemed, to some drivers of the Resistance, to be distant from the masses to whom it should have been connected. Abu Iyad relates that one of the reasons that the Resistance was in crisis, as of 1973, was its treatment of the general public. He describes this as demonstrating a “lack of frankness toward the masses—and the disrespect implied thereby.”<sup>81</sup> To him, this

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<sup>78</sup> Malbrunot, interview.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> This can be seen, for example, in the opening page of *al-Hadaf*, which typically contains letters from members abroad.

<sup>81</sup> Maksoud, *Palestine Lives*, 44.

disrespect relates, in part, to the difficult relationship between the resistance and the Arab regimes. In a description that appears to be rather evasive, he states the following:

Those in positions of authority may, in certain cases, find it difficult to be candid with the people; but we must arrange our own circumstance in such a way as to not fear frankness. True, for many reasons I cannot pronounce my opinion of some Arab regimes. But if our situation had been organized to deal with this matter, I could now do so without paying a heavy price. Those who have no faith in the masses may think that plain-speaking to them is a case of political auctioneering, mere words. But in fact it means clarification of all the issues raised by the resistance. Many things happen that the people do not understand. If we had tried to explain the reasons for certain actions, we would have won over the people to our side once and for all. They would have refused either to stand against us or to be neutral.<sup>82</sup>

Abu Iyad speaks to the difficulty of maintaining a resistance movement while at the same time mobilising and maintaining the support of the masses. By 1973, this was particularly problematic, due to the Resistance's trouble with Jordan. In the same year, the PFLP also had a similar sense of how the masses were being treated, stating:

The mobilization of masses, in this sense (and with the aim of creating the strength necessary for changing the existing balance of forces to enable the resistance to find a way out of its crisis) requires a transformation in the style of our work and practice.

What is required is not simply the repetition of the word 'masses' and verbal emphasis

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

on the popular line of the party, but a change in the way we behave which aims at translating such words into action. We should make it a central tradition in our work to be always among the masses, to think with them and to subject our programmes to their interests, capabilities and energies<sup>83</sup>

Towards the close of the period, Fatah and the PFLP considered that there was a lack of candid speech amongst the Resistance, particularly when speaking to the masses. This related to affairs both internal and external to the PLO. Constant tension with Arab leaders, King Hussein in particular, led to the need for perpetual manoeuvring by the PLO's leadership. Nonetheless, just as the intellectuals saw that some Arab leaders chose a different path than that which they had agreed upon in Khartoum, some of the intellectuals perceived that peers within the PLO also made definitive statements regarding steps being taken by the Resistance, that were different to their actions.

This criticism seems applicable across the Resistance, as evident also in Kamal Nasser's expressed opinion that certain members of the Resistance were out of touch with the reality of the Palestinian situation. Without understanding where they stood and what matters must be addressed, it would be nearly impossible to explain them clearly to the public. This perceived lack of representation was a factor in the formation of Hawatmeh's Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP). By 1969, Hawatmeh split from the PFLP, joined by others, all of whom who felt that the PFLP's claim that they were following a Marxist agenda in rallying the masses, and the working class in particular, to support their cause, was not genuine. In a 1968

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<sup>83</sup> PFLP, "P.F.L.P. Bulletin," 1. Location: La Contemporaine, Paris, 2016.

conference of the PFLP, Hawatmeh and his followers accused Habash of making "a verbal commitment" to the left regarding the PFLP's platform without following it.<sup>84</sup> According to Kazzuha:

The political platform defined in the Report bore the distinct touch of Hawatima [Hawatmeh] and his associates. It extended the political analysis which the Movement's Executive Committee had elaborated in July 1967 to include the modern history of the Palestinian national movement. It claimed that the Palestinian feudal and bourgeois classes were as responsible for the Arab disaster in 1948 as were their counterparts in other Arab countries. Similarly, the shocking defeat in June 1967 was the outcome of the reluctant and undetermined approach of the Arab petty bourgeoisie in confronting imperialism and Zionism, and its half-hearted attempts to mobilize the Arab masses.<sup>85</sup>

The content of the report revealed the paradigm that Hawatmeh saw as the Resistance's new reality—the rise of the Palestinian proletariat as means to Palestinian liberation. Such a Marxist-tinged goal could, arguably, only be attempted in a post-defeat reality. As Faris said, one of the distinctive “developmental features” of the period was the “dominance of progressive thought,” a “tendency towards the left,” and the “rise of Marxist thought.”<sup>86</sup> The PFLP Executive Committee's decisions on the report, reinforce the idea that the intellectuals understood the importance of this period and the urgency of immediate action that would

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<sup>84</sup> Kazzuha, *Revolutionary Transformation in the Arab World*, 86.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>86</sup> Faris, interview.



include not only armed resistance, but also a strong grasp of how Palestinian society must change in order to ease the burden of the resistance. This is why the report concluded with the idea that the "'Road to National Salvation' lay in the adoption of the ideology of the proletariat, the enhancement of the political consciousness of the masses, the rejection of Security Council Resolution 242, and the establishment of closer relations with the Arab Revolutionary movement."<sup>87</sup> While it is somewhat unclear as to what extent Habash and Hawatmeh were at odds at this point, Habash's acknowledgement that there needed to be an involvement of the masses without pushing the point further suggests, at the least, a lesser degree of determination regarding a Palestinian proletarian-led resistance.

The idea of an "enhancement of political consciousness" is something that Kamal Nasser, Alloush, and Anis Sayigh all worked to nurture amongst Palestinians. Despite differences in opinions, the post-1967 intellectual paradigms seemed to include this point. In enhancing the engagement of all Palestinians with the complexities of their situation, they could create a resistance front that had a greater chance of being victorious. Here, is evidence of Fanon's national consciousness, in which creating an overall awareness of the struggle and its needs, beginning with an education of the population, is encouraged. In his memoir, Anis Sayigh goes so far as to emphasise that some of the researchers at the PRC were not tertiary degree holders, in an effort to demonstrate and celebrate the class diversity of the Resistance.<sup>88</sup> Regardless of uniting for a cause despite socio-economic background, the intellectuals diverge as to how they hope to steer the public, and they disagree on the extent to

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<sup>87</sup> Kazziha, *Revolutionary Transformation in the Arab World*, 87.

<sup>88</sup> Sayigh, *Anīs Ṣāyigh 'an Anīs Ṣāyigh*, 222–23. Note that, Sayigh also gives his opinion that most of the intellectuals working in the PRC were coming from the PFLP and DFLP.

which they consider that they have indeed reached the public. Additionally, the heavy emphasis on the *fedayeen* in the factions' literature and the efforts made to empower them, may have undermined the unity of the PLO.

Rather than focusing on vying for public attention—which at least two of the factions found to be disingenuous—the intellectuals and the PLO more generally, may have found it more effective to look inward and critically at what were ambiguous plans. Without a clear message to the public, this important part of the Resistance's program was lost or at the least muddled, demonstrating another shortcoming on the intellectuals' part. Thus, even within the basic idea of "mass mobilisation," there existed a plethora of criticisms as to why this goal was not being achieved. Nonetheless, a look through any issue of *al-Hadaf* during the time period, reveals the opposite—the *fedayeen* were motivated, prepared, and indeed already undertaking armed struggle. Aside from their general support of fighting against occupation and Zionism, for the Palestinian people as well as those committed to their cause, the question of resistance centred on whom they should support and how they should define themselves as politically committed; that is, through a working-class struggle, a more general anti-imperialist struggle, or some other way. The questions being asked by the population and the demands being made by the intellectuals, as evident in the oftentimes instructive articles within factions' magazines, pose a hurdle to creating a *fedayeen* resistance. The Resistance would face the challenge of defining itself, while so much was being asked of it and in so many directions.

*Purposeful Ambiguities: Obstacles to Resistance*

Fatah's political program was unclear to many intellectuals. As'ad captured this while describing Arafat's character, which he called "pragmatic," demonstrating this through his resistance "methodology." As'ad explained,

For example when he raised the slogan of 'revolution until victory,' to me, that was vague, and to our generation that was vague, and we in the PFLP, or in the Arab Nationalist Movement before, and the Ba'th movement, etc., we used to say 'oh, the man is hiding something. One, he says "til victory,' and victory could mean so many things, but if he said 'until total liberation,' that could be quite clear.<sup>89</sup>

The ambiguity in Arafat's statements provided a looseness to his political program that is evident in the PLO's transition from armed struggle as a means to liberation, to diplomacy as means to regain some territory. Even members of Fatah were unhappy with the vagueness of Fatah's program. Abu Iyad (Salah Khalaf) mirrors As'ad's point in a 1973 interview with Clovis Maksoud, when he states the three main problems of the PLO at that time. Amongst his answers is, "the absence of a single clear political line embracing all organizations."<sup>90</sup> The absence of it as stated by Abu Iyad and as alluded to by As'ad, contributed to factionalisation. Abu Iyad's third point asserts this notion, stating that "the relationship between the groups" is one of "organizational rivalry." He adds that "had the political line been clear, and organizational relations absent from the scene, the crisis of the resistance movement would not have been as great."<sup>91</sup> Abu Iyad's point can be seen earlier in the period as well. For example

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<sup>89</sup> Abdul-Rahman, interview.

<sup>90</sup> Abu Iyad in Maksoud, *Palestine Lives*, 43.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 43.

when asked in 1969, “What precisely is Fateh’s concept of the democratic Palestinian state?”

Fatah responded:

We have taken up arms to arrive at a genuinely peaceful solution for the problem, not a spurious peace imposed by aggression and racialism. This peaceful solution cannot be arrived at except within the framework of a democratic state in Palestine. What are the details? I believe that the national struggle in the course of its development will take care of the details, but this is the broad strategic line which governs all particulars.<sup>92</sup>

For Fatah, armed struggle would naturally lead to the quest for a democratic state, the details of which would emerge as the Resistance gained ground, both literally and figuratively.

While in 1969, Fatah claimed to have a clear ideology, the post-Black September reality revealed, at least for some within the movement, a different understanding. In 1973, Abu Iyad stated:

What happened in Jordan before September is a clear indication that a plot to annihilate the resistance was being planned...In my opinion, the nature and essence of this crisis are to be found in the internal situation, whether on the level of major organizations, of the relations between them, or of the task as a whole...Any problem within Fateh reflects, one way or another, on the entire resistance movement. Fateh’s lack of a clear political line and of any stand on fundamental issues must have an effect

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<sup>92</sup> Fatah, *A Dialogue with Fateh*, 65.

on the other organizations and the overall movement. This is why I say that the internal crises of each organization and of the resistance movement as a whole are interrelated. And it is why I believe that the quandary of the movement stems from within.<sup>93</sup>

This lack of unity, aside from revealing ideological differences, would tear at the PLO during their conflict with Jordan, causing further rifts amongst the intellectuals. Beyond Fatah's approach, or lack thereof, to pressing political problems and events, its plan to *first* liberate Palestine and *then* create the necessary ideology to build a Palestinian society, did not have the requisite lineal logic. Without first establishing a firm ideological foundation, it was difficult to make definitive decisions related to resistance strategies and ultimately to liberation. Some of the intellectuals also saw this ambiguity in the framework of armed struggle. To Bilal al-Hasan, for example, Fatah's de-contextualised stance on armed resistance was a weakness. Its framework of resistance dominated its literature (he refers particularly to Fatah's annual books of 1968 and 1969), yet, he claims, "we will never find an analysis of the defeat that made Fatah's framework of popular armed resistance the prevailing Palestinian framework."<sup>94</sup> Without understanding this, the Resistance was at a disadvantage in creating a clear strategy and remaining true to it. In some instances, this would work to Fatah's advantage, in terms of gaining political clout. Nonetheless, despite general approaches towards a democratic Palestine, led by the masses through armed struggle, other factions did not necessarily have more clearly defined means to reach this end.

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<sup>93</sup> Abu Iyad in Maksoud, *Palestine Lives*, 43.

<sup>94</sup> al-Hassan, "al-Fāhim al-Filastīnī li-hazīmat ḥuzayrān," 6.

Hawatmeh noted another type of ambiguity in the rhetoric of the Resistance. He perceived a gap between what the Resistance claimed to be accomplishing and what it was able to accomplish. He notes:

The resistance movement, however, did bring forth a number of theoretically revolutionary slogans such as “the people’s national war,” “the people’s war of national liberation,” “protracted war;” yet these were hollow and empty of content. To transform them into meaningful slogans requires, from the start, mobilizing the Palestinian and Arab masses against the whole camp opposed to the cause of the revolution and the liberation of Palestine.<sup>95</sup>

The “whole camp,” given the context of his statement, included the Jordanians. By this time, conflict had already ignited between the Hashemite Kingdom and the Resistance. Al-Azm shared a similar sentiment regarding the Jordanian regime, remarking that the “original sin” of the Palestinian Resistance was not removing it.<sup>96</sup> Resentment and frustrations with Jordan not only caused uproar within the Resistance’s internal debates, but also destabilised the entire Resistance and its place in the Arab political arena. Aside from this point, according to Hawatmeh, the period lacked sincerity in the ideas put forward. Comparing Hawatmeh’s perception of the shortcomings of the time period, to the conviction found within the articles of the time—in, for example, *al-Hadaf* and al-Hout’s pieces—brings no clarity to the question of whether the efforts of the intellectuals, at the time, were in vain. What would become necessary was appropriately navigating through these internal and external conflicts by using

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<sup>95</sup> Maksoud, *Palestine Lives*, 87.

<sup>96</sup> Sadik Al-Azm, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 5 January, 2016, Berlin.

the paradigms as guides to reaching liberation. As Hawatmeh notes, “the difference between a successful revolution and a fumbling one lies in the way each one deals with these turns imposed upon it by shifts in the balance of forces.”<sup>97</sup> For many, the constant divisions amongst intellectuals and factions, internally, made dealing with and conquering the political obstacles of the time more difficult. These internal difficulties posed by factionalisation, were compounded by the challenges of external relations between the PLO and the Arab states, whose support was typically not as strong as promised.

The lack of unity within the Resistance, coupled with the ambiguous nature of its relationship with the Arab states, upon whom it often relied, would continue to pose obstacles for creating and executing revolutionary ideas. For all of the richness that diverse perspectives and even disagreements gave to the period, factionalisation created constant contention and even distrust. Increased hostilities between factions and disagreements between their leaders led to the development of even more factions and more enthusiastic and ambitious debates as to where resistance, Palestinian society, and the Arab world could go. The lack of clarity on the path to resistance led to an ambiguity in the steps needed to reach liberation, begging the question as to whether it was the lack of clarity in ideologies that led to factionalisation or if it was factionalisation that led to a lack of clarity in ideologies. Given this ambiguity, larger goals of the Resistance also became clouded. The extent to which the masses were being mobilised—arguably a fundamental element of the revolution—was unclear. Their mobilisation, including

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<sup>97</sup> Maksoud, *Palestine Lives*, 94–95.

those within the Arab world at large, became a point of contention ideologically for the intellectuals and for the factions and their relationships with Arab states more generally.

While some understood factionalism to demonstrate the extent to which the PLO was already democratic, the fractures within the organisation demonstrated an inability to come to a consensus. While 1967 may have started with the promise of stronger Palestinian-led resistance, with a united front, this impression was something of a façade, as would become clear in the number of divisions even within political parties of the PLO. Ideological differences between factions oftentimes centred on the struggle between focusing on armed resistance and pushing for larger systemic changes. For example, those more wary of the utility of armed struggle, argued that it should occupy a secondary role, to systemic changes. They preferred a holistic approach, that would fundamentally change Palestinian and even Arab society—an ambitious goal that would bring great challenges to the Resistance. Others were keen to focus on specific goals with the intention of regaining lost territory. These are just two examples of the different streams of thought that developed. Thus, while it was clear that 1967 opened doors for the Palestinians, the question of how to respond to these opened doors caused intellectuals to part ways. In the post-1967 era, even close colleagues disagreed. Indeed, the period began with fractured understandings as to what resistance should gain and how it should be executed.



## Conclusion

Aside from their general support of fighting against occupation and Zionism, for the Palestinian people as well as those committed to their cause, the question of resistance centred on whom they should support and how they should define themselves as politically committed. The questions being asked by the population and the demands being made by the intellectuals, as evident in the oftentimes instructive articles within factions' magazines, posed another difficulty for creating a mass, revolutionary resistance movement. Fanon is aware of the dangers of such stumbling blocks towards national consciousness and liberation. As was discussed in the Introduction, Fanon hauntingly premeditates the challenges that the intellectuals will face, citing the lack of a coherent plan of execution as one of the greatest pitfalls on the path to a successful effort at decolonisation.<sup>98</sup>

With specific reference to the research question posed by this study, it became clear early on that the problems faced by the intellectuals stemmed from uncertain strategies and vague ideologies. Beyond armed struggle and Palestinian liberation, the discussions of ideologies did not necessarily have the substance needed to carry the movement. This shaky beginning, contributed to ongoing disunity within the PLO and their continual struggle to create a cohesive, ideologically sound movement. The general use of rhetoric, was understood early on as a result of a void of revolutionary power that the Resistance had hoped their movement would carry. At this early stage, there is evidence of some efforts at creating a left-leaning struggle, yet it was clear that these abstract ideas were not based on widespread popular

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<sup>98</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 59.

sentiment or approbation. The lack of a strong following for the ideas and the factions, has been self-limiting. This is a point that will be revisited in Chapter Five. We can also see that factionalism, while at times seen positively, also can be considered a shortcoming of the intellectuals because it demonstrates an inability to unite for the sake of their cause. This was, in part, because of what the cause actually was—a Palestinian national liberation movement for the sake of Palestinian self-determination or a Palestinian national liberation movement that would lead to a larger, regional revolution—remained up for debate. Lastly, the ambiguity within their ideologies, while at times purposeful, is also a shortcoming, demonstrating their struggle to define and layout their goals and strategies. This also leads to the question of whether or not they struggled to do so because the ideas simply did not fit their audience. This question will be discussed in Chapter Five.

External factors influenced the ideological decisions of factions and their leaders. In general, dodging the political backlash of creating a revolutionary movement, one that would change the makeup of the region, proved too big of a task for some, and, for others, it was something not even worth attempting. For example, while some factions could never command the resources to truly bring popular revolution to fruition, Fatah chose to engage in armed struggle early on. At the same time, however, they also were dedicated to non-interference in Arab regimes. Fatah's dedication to remaining outside of the political affairs of other countries, not only helped them to survive but allowed them to lead the PLO, a position that they have continued to hold for decades. However, it is political manoeuvres like this, that took away the potential revolutionary strength of the PLO.



**Chapter Four:**  
**Limitations on the Role of the Revolutionary Intellectual through Ironies and Contradictions**  
**of the Revolution**

The previous chapter provided an overview of some of the main frameworks, or paradigms, of resistance discussed by the intellectuals. This chapter explores these paradigms through the intellectuals' discussions of the successes and failures in implementing their desired frameworks. It also details the tensions and uncertainties within the Resistance, bringing to light the overarching contradiction—that is, that the intellectuals were aware of the flaws in their plans, discussed them, and went ahead regardless. Discussions took place through commentary and criticisms made by the intellectuals in their writings. This provided analysis of the progress of the Resistance and shaped the evolution of intellectual thought. These commentaries oftentimes differ from what is written in the publications produced by the factions; publications which sought to explain operations, explore ideological angles and make calls to the masses, all directed to a readership typically comprised of a factions' own members. What becomes clear in these discussions around, and reflections on, successes and failures, is the impossibility of many of the proclaimed goals of the Resistance, due to hindrances of the time period, the approaches of particular factions, and the political stances of regional Arab states. These obstacles reveal the inherent contradictions present in the plans of the Resistance.

In addition to exposing these tensions and contradictions, I ask what they say about the limitations of the intellectuals as revolutionary actors. This will expose the gap between, on the

one hand, the perception the intellectuals had of their own revolutionary roles and, on the other, their capacities to create the change they desired, illuminating what the intellectuals were criticising, as well as whether these criticisms were, in fact, valid. By focussing on the contradictions of the Resistance, this chapter raises important questions about the boundary between the roles of intellectual and revolutionary, particularly in light of the emphasis on the masses necessarily being at the heart of the struggle.

The contradictions explored in this chapter, demonstrate the shortcomings of the Resistance and provide important clues as to the extent to which these shortcomings were a product of the time or of the Resistance's own failings and inabilities. This chapter is not meant to be a criticism of the intellectuals' plans for resistance; rather, its purpose is to bring to light the criticisms presented by the intellectuals themselves during the period, in order to make a connection between these critiques and the subsequent actions taken by the factions and by the PLO more generally.

In exploring the contradictions present in the plans of the Resistance, and in understanding the limitation of the intellectuals, we can further recognise the obstacles and complexities that resulted from these contradictions. Aside from contextual factors, there were also, arguably, limitations on the capabilities of the intellectuals that were a product of the steps or missteps of the Resistance. Two issues, in particular, will become evident in this chapter: the inability to compromise; and the often stark disjuncture between what was said and what was done. The constant disagreements and subsequent fragmentation of the Resistance contributed to conflicts that typically lacked resolution. While factionalism had its positive aspects—in many ways demonstrating the democratic elements present in the

Resistance—the negatives become particularly apparent under the pressures of the time. Disagreements over how to approach the major political dilemmas brought to light in the intellectuals' writings, coupled with continual competition between the factions, made many of the goals of liberation more difficult to achieve. Furthermore, many of the expressed goals of the Resistance were in conflict with the political strategies employed. This demonstrated the difference between what was hoped for, what successes were claimed, and what was actually achieved.

The difference between what was said and what was practically achievable, also leads to the question of commitment. By commitment, I refer to the extent to which the intellectuals were dedicated to the revolutionary aspirations of the cause. Rather than being a factor that I will judge, I use the term to reflect the nature of the discussions taking place at the time. That is, the discussions and arguments taking place within and across factions reveal general implications that certain individuals simply did not want to carry out a larger, revolutionary struggle. In recognising the divergence between what was possible against what was desirable, the intellectuals chose to change the direction of resistance. While to them, this was simply a practical step, to others it was betrayal, demonstrating a lack in commitment.

The great Arab revolution envisioned by the intellectuals, involved a fundamental shift in the structure of society and reflected global events of the time period (for example, the Algerian and Cuban revolutions). However, it clashed locally with the regimes present in the region—regimes that oftentimes were relied upon for the survival of the Palestinian Resistance. Furthermore, others identified it as simply impossible. Quandt notes: "I think for the PLO...it was simply a misjudgement...The PLO was engaging with a well-armed, professional army, and

they [the PLO] had basically trained as guerrillas. It's hard to win those kind of battles"<sup>1</sup> With the passage of time, as will be discussed in Chapter Five, we see that by the end of the period, it is Fatah that recognises the weight of this statement more than the leftist groups. The vision put forward by the intellectuals, not only threatened regional power structures but, as I will discuss in Chapter Five, to some extent clashed with the needs of the larger population. The criticism of a lack of sufficient effort at mass mobilisation could also be perceived as a criticism of an individual's, or a faction's, commitment to the revolutionary cause. As discussed in Chapter Three, the overwhelming support of armed resistance, across the Resistance, also invoked criticism. The constant competition between factions to lead armed operations and to lay claim to them, arguably took away from other important ideological points of resistance. This, therefore, caused the intellectuals to question Resistance members' commitment to the larger cause of Palestinian liberation.

One of the defining features of the period, which seems to be agreed upon by all, is that despite arguments amongst factions and intellectuals, the diversity of the groups demonstrated the type of society that they hoped to achieve for Palestine. This diversity, however, came at a price. The extent of differing views and disagreements led to confusion in regards to the direction of the Resistance, creating serious obstacles for efforts at a united front at a point when it was needed most. This will be discussed particularly in relation to the struggle that the Resistance had with maintaining relations with regimes within the region. The appropriate

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<sup>1</sup> William B. Quandt, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 25 September, 2017, phone interview.

stance towards these regimes—and to Jordan in particular—is something that factions differed upon greatly and would also be the cause of serious internal political strife.

### **Factors of the Time: Further Points on Fragmentation and Fatah's Rise**

This chapter will implement the same two points of reference used in the previous chapter, in order to look at the contradictions present in terms of the paradigms of Resistance, as well as the Resistance's relationship to the period—and the period's relationship to the Resistance. These points of reference—the Resistance and the time period in which they worked—allow us to assess the contradictions between the perceived role the intellectuals had of themselves, and the extent to which that role was actualised in meeting rooms, on battlefields, and in the minds of the masses. Continuous struggles with Jordan, Nasser's death, and the promotion of political programs that ultimately denied the Resistance agency in the conflict with Israel, put into question the intellectuals' ability to carry the Resistance to liberation and to its larger goals of change within the broader Arab world.

An exploration of what the intellectuals did to the time period and what the time period did to them, reveals two negative points of fragmentation. Aside from more purposeful missteps, the constraints of the time period, limited the capacity of the intellectuals to achieve their goals. In spite of this, as discussed in Chapter Three, many pointed out that their inability to remain close to their objectives and appropriately divide the tasks of liberation, particularly amongst the masses, was a primary cause for regression. It was also pointed out that there was a lack of clear objectives, in part due to the uncertainties of the political climate of the time,



which caused the intellectuals to waver, rather than remain committed to the ultimate goals of the Resistance. Taking these points into account, will help to illuminate the problems between what the intellectuals thought was possible, the extent to which those possibilities were hindered by the times, by the Resistance itself, and by the interests of the various Arab states that backed different factions.

This begs the question as to the extent to which the Resistance movement was hindered by its inability to organise itself and share the burdens presented to them during the time. Alongside fragmentation, states' politics revealed a potential fundamental problem between the Palestinian revolutionaries and Arab governments: the Palestinian revolution, especially as it connected to the larger Arab revolution, would lead to the fall or at least the significant reform of Arab states. The Resistance understood that their policy would thus cause existential problems for them, which could provide an explanation as to why Fatah's policy of non-interference became dangerous to the survival and goals of a *revolutionary* Resistance. This policy became a major point of criticism, by those not aligned with Fatah. While it was contradictory to the Resistance's larger goals, it, arguably, helped Fatah secure its position as the strongest faction in the PLO.

### **The Response of the Intellectuals to the Rise of Fatah**

Sayigh captures well the contextual reasons for the conflict between the Resistance and the interests of Arab regimes, and it is worth quoting him at length:

The very success of the guerrilla movement contained inherent tensions. Its slogans of 'people's war' and 'total liberation of Palestinian soil' could only be attained through the total involvement of the Arab confrontation states and beyond, yet these aims sat ill with host governments and moreover clashed with the pragmatic requirements of securing wider recognition of the PLO as a statist actor with international character. That serious changes in Arab state power, and even sweeping social revolution, were required in order to remove obstacles to full involvement only intensified this tension. The result was a contest between the guerrilla groups—carried out at every level of politics, ideology, and organizations, and politics—based on the false premise that these were all real options among which they could make free choices (in the historical sense). This was most evident in the contrast between the approach of the mainstream, Palestino-centric Fateh, which tightened its grip on PLO institutions and strove to assert the PLO as the central arena of Palestinian national politics and decision-making, and that of its main rivals, whose espousal of Arab nationalism and Marxist-Leninism was accompanied by support for subversion of Arab governments, incipient attempts at class struggle, and forays into international terrorism.<sup>2</sup>

The intellectuals were aware of the existence of contradictions, and along with the criticisms present within their works, was the growth of tensions between factions, with Fatah maintaining the lead role in the PLO. The melding of nationalism with leftist ideologies was a continual challenge for them due to some of the inherent contradictions between the two.

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<sup>2</sup> Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State : The Palestinian National Movement, 1949–1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 147–48.

Furthermore, Sayigh points out that the guerrilla groups' impression of the range of choices they had was simplistic: given the limitations of their power, faction political mobility was much more difficult than assumed. According to Sayigh, the struggle of the non-Fatah factions to gain political mobility and ideological respect, ended with the victory of the Jordanian regime over the PLO in 1971. This further solidified Fatah's position as the strongest faction, and, more significantly, solidified the PLO's position as an organisation that would focus on Palestinian liberation, rather than mass Arab revolution. In spite of Fatah's victory, factions and intellectuals would continue to stress the importance of popular resistance as a means to not only achieve Palestinian liberation, but also Arab unity. What is missing from Sayigh's work, however, is further analysis of the intellectuals' reactions to these events and the implications their reactions had on the anti-colonial efforts of the Resistance and the PLO more generally. I intend to expand Sayigh's statement in order to provide documentation and analysis of how the intellectuals perceived this difficult time. From this, can be gained a better sense of the intellectuals' changing roles, as well as their contributions to anti-colonial resistance in the region. We can see from this time period the type of impact that it had on the future of Palestinian resistance, particularly as Fatah took the lead.

## Arab Revolution through the Palestinian Resistance

In 1967, the stated goal of the Resistance was to create a larger, holistic struggle that would liberate Palestine and ultimately lead to a revolution across the Arab world.<sup>3</sup> The following statement from the PFLP makes this clear:

We deploy our efforts for a realistic alliance with all Palestinian forces persecuted or oppressed inside Arab countries just as in Israel itself, an alliance in which the interest is to provoke a radical revolutionary change in the region. The goal of our revolution is to establish a democratic society in the region, in which Palestine would be an integral part, united to the progressivist and anti-imperialist movement in the world.<sup>4</sup>

This, at the least, was what was claimed by many of the factions, and as we will see, it is evident in the writings of the intellectuals' statements as well. Nonetheless, there existed a major obstacle preventing the achievement of this goal. The gap between this comprehensive radical aspiration and reality explains a weakness of the Resistance in achieving its goals, ultimately exposing one of the self-limitations of this paradigm: it was unlikely that the Arab regimes would willingly take part in a revolution that had the potential to weaken their power. Despite this, or perhaps in order to handle this, the factions developed methods for managing their relationships with Arab states. While some would fight them—evidenced by what took place in

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<sup>3</sup> This has been discussed in the previous two chapters, but for further evidence, see, for example, Paul Chamberlin, *The Global Offensive: The United States, the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Making of the Post-Cold War Order* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 19–21.

<sup>4</sup> PFLP Foreign Relations Committee, "Palestine en lutte: bulletin d'information mensuel du Comité National Palestine de Belgique," [Palestine in Struggle: Monthly Newsletter of the National Palestine Committee of Belgium], Le Comité National Palestine de Belgique (Brussels: le Comité National Palestine de Belgique, 1974), 3. Location: La Contemporaine, Paris, 2016. Although this particular quote comes from 1973 it is consistent with the goals of the time period under discussion.

Jordan—others would develop policies to avoid challenging them—such as Fatah’s policy of non-intervention. Criticism of both positions was prevalent and will be discussed below. With the passing of time and the proliferation of internal problems, as well as problems with Arab regimes, the rhetoric of the Resistance became less concerned with the larger revolutionary goal, than had been the case at the beginning of the time period. This could be due to the willingness of some factions, and the intellectuals who led them, to waver in their conviction in the face of the significant challenges of the time.

### **Black September—The Gap between the Regimes and the Resistance.**

This section will explore the problematic nature of creating a resistance movement that, in many ways, relied upon Arab regimes for support yet, at the same time, called for radical change in political systems in the region. I explore this dilemma through Black September as well as through the position of the intellectuals within the PLO during challenging political times. Their position as leaders of a vanguard movement, or at least their perception of themselves as such, placed challenges on their ability to work in a political climate that often called for acquiescence to greater powers. The battleground that Jordan became, represented the divide that was emerging between Palestinian liberation and the larger revolutionary struggle. For some, through this battle, it was clear that the gap between Arab regimes and the Resistance could not be bridged. The frustration that many felt towards Arab regimes, continued to pervade factions of the Resistance, particularly the non-dominant factions.<sup>5</sup> Arab

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<sup>5</sup> Almost every faction except Fatah.

regimes that were once seen as revolutionary, began to be perceived as remaining representations of class-based power. The PFLP notes:

The transformation of some petit-bourgeois regimes into a force of repression against the masses and their revolutionary activities so as to proceed with the retreatist policy imposed on them by their inability to face up to the task of this phase, is the most important struggle that is taking place between the Arab masses on the one hand, and imperialism, Israel and Arab reaction on the other.<sup>6</sup>

The negative turn in perception of Arab Regimes, such as Egypt, was not reflected in perceptions of the Jordanian government, which were overwhelmingly negative even before Black September, in large part due to the Kingdom's position within the Arab–Israeli conflict.<sup>7</sup> The PFLP's view of Jordan, as of 1969, was that, "The Jordanian reactionary regime found itself after the June defeat, at the weakest point in its history. A history founded on a complete reliance on imperialism externally, and exploiting forces internally."<sup>8</sup> Such a weakness gave the intellectuals and the Resistance in general, room to find a path through their struggle and make way for the type of systemic revolution that they hoped to see take place within the region. According to Sayigh, this would change with the Jordanian defeat of the Resistance as well as

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<sup>6</sup> PFLP, "P.F.L.P. Bulletin," (Beirut: Foreign Relations Committee of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, 1973), 4. Location: La Contemporaine, Paris, 2016.

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, the land deals between Jordan and the Jewish forces in 1948. Ilan Pappé, *The Forgotten Palestinians: A History of the Palestinians in Israel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 26.

<sup>8</sup> PFLP, "Tasks of the New State: The Political Report of the Third National Congress of P.F.L.P.," (Beirut: Foreign Relations Committee of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, 1973), 4. Location: La Contemporaine, Paris, 2016. This article is the first part of a series related to the third congress, which took place from 6–9 March 1972. The first congress was in August, 1968, the second in second in February 1969.

with the consolidation of power in the hands of the Arab regimes. At this point, we see an increase in the Resistance's mention of reactionary regimes. From the Resistance's perspective, the reactionary nature of the regime was evident in their willingness to cooperate with western governments, particularly in regards to Israel. The Khartoum agreement seemed to recede into the distance. As the PFLP notes, "Egypt's acceptance of the Roger's plan came as a logical step in the retreatist direction which the petit-bourgeois military regime had found itself forced to follow since the defeat."<sup>9</sup> To the Resistance, and the non-Fatah factions in particular, many of the Arab regimes were seen to take the easy road in acquiescing to diplomatic agreements from western states. Despite this view, however, the Arab regimes (Egypt and Jordan in particular), had never chosen to remain completely committed to the Resistance's cause.

The continuing struggle with regimes created a situation in which the regimes posed a threat to the existence of the PLO, or at least some of the factions within it. The PFLP in particular was concerned about the potential of this occurrence and made efforts to inform their followers. Consider this quotation from the PFLP's bulletin:

The transformation of some petit-bourgeois regimes into a force of repression against the masses and their revolutionary activities so as to proceed with the retreatist policy imposed on them by their inability to face up to the task of this phase, is the most important struggle that is taking place between the Arab masses on the one hand, and imperialism, Israel and Arab reaction on the other. This situation should not blind us from seeing the other side of the picture, i.e., the emergence of new class forces

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<sup>9</sup> "P.F.L.P. Bulletin," 5. Location: La Contemporaine, Paris, 2016.

composed of vanguard workers, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals and a wide progressive sector of youth. These forces have on various occasions, expressed their awareness of the dynamics of the ongoing struggle and of their primary role in this struggle. There is no doubt that these manifestations, measured by the amount of repression which they have been subjected to, are important indicators of a new birth. This fact is very important for our understanding of the retreatist position of the petit-bourgeois regimes. This retreat does not occur in a vacuum and in isolation from a historical process of class polarisation. Thus we have to realise that the new class forces and the consolidation of their role requires time and struggle...We face today in some of the petit-bourgeois regimes, a new reality. This reality differs radically from that which existed in 1968, 1969 and at the beginning of 1970. It requires a new stand.<sup>10</sup>

Rather than proclaiming the fight against Israel as the primary struggle, the PFLP found the greatest threat at this point to be imperialist forces perceived to also be present within the Arab world. Such a struggle complicated the path to resistance. Rather than being able to rely on Arab regimes for support, many now saw them as a force that they must work against. The focus on Arab regimes and stances against Fatah would become even more striking as time progressed. The PFLP notes, in the above quotation, that the Resistance movement has widened as it spread to include, along with revolutionary intellectuals, more of the masses, including the leftist-leaning youth, all of whom would fight against the imperialist forces within the region. They saw the emergence and growth of these groups as an indication of the

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 4.



Resistance's potential. To them, what was in the way were imperialist forces acting in the region. Arguably, the PFLP's call for "a new stand" came too late, as not only had Fatah's position been consolidated, but the events moving forward would complicate efforts to create a successful, united mass movement in the fashion originally desired.

### *Efforts towards Unity and Revolution Led to the Opposite*

While in the eyes of many within the Resistance, Arab regimes were becoming a foe, the Resistance as a whole, continued to rely upon their support. Aside from requiring funding in order to survive, the participation of Arab regimes came with other hopes and aspirations. Alloush states that, "popular war alone is the basis of the work now and in the future. There is no place for states or regime armies."<sup>11</sup> This radical statement by Alloush demonstrates the extent to which certain intellectuals were intent on entirely removing the regimes from the struggle. This ambition, as we will see, became increasingly difficult. Additionally, while Alloush's two points seem contradictory, he works to find where the regimes and the masses converge by suggesting that the regimes' willingness to support the public would demonstrate the extent to which Arab efforts are successful. Alloush takes a strong position in regards to resistance and its components—that it should be far removed from governments and instead rest with the masses. His position of course came to be marginalised within the PLO: it would have required Arab regimes to relinquish much of their power, so that moving away from this position likely allowed the organisation to survive. Alloush's point, then, captures what was unrealistic, in regards to the capacities of the factions. Fatah also understood this position and

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<sup>11</sup> Naji Alloush, *Munāqishāt ḥawl al-thawrah al-Filasṭīniyah* [Conversations Surrounding the Palestinian Revolution] (Beirut: Dār al-Ṭalīy'a, 1970), 9.

made their plans accordingly, creating a larger gap between them and those who were more insistent on creating revolutionary change.

As discussed in Chapter Three, the intellectuals struggled to effectively reach and unite the masses. Alongside difficulties in uniting the masses came the question of the intellectuals' level of sincerity in regards to this cause. Munh al-Sulh, a Lebanese intellectual, argued that unity became so inclusive that the core of the Resistance—the *fedayeen*—were forgotten. Rather than creating revolutionary unity which would maintain a focus on the *fedayeen*, he argues that unity became solely for political benefit. He explains, “instead of being unity between the fighters, it developed and became unity between the revolutionaries, then it developed and became unity between everyone.”<sup>12</sup> To al-Sulh, the focus on creating a unity amongst all, caused the Resistance to lose an essential part of its focus: guerrilla resistance. It is likely that al-Sulh speaks to the nature of rhetoric coming from the factions, a rhetoric that was often general, and often still married with the more basic notions of unity that came from Arab nationalism. From the left's perspective, given the failures the left saw in the ideology, remaining close to it would result in further defeat. Al-Sulh's criticism is given force in the context of a failed attempt to overthrow the Jordanian government, the continuing loss of power of all factions except Fatah, and the willingness of Arab regimes to work with western governments, as well as Israel, in negotiations. The ongoing War of Attrition between Egypt and Israel ultimately ended in the signing of the Rogers Plan in July 1970, by Egypt, Jordan, and

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<sup>12</sup> Al-Azm, Sadik, Bilal al-Hassan Shafiq al-Hout, Ghassan Kanafani, Ahmad Khalifah, Sh'ath Nabil, Munh al-Sulh, "al-Muqāwimah al-Filasṭīniyah fī waḍ'ahā al-rāhin," [The Palestinian Resistance on the Status Quo], *Shu'ūn Filasṭīniyah*, no. 2 (1971): 57.

Israel.<sup>13</sup> This came with staunch opposition from much of the Resistance. Armed struggle and a leftist-leaning movement was losing the hold on that which it had just recently set its sights on.

Others, however, were hoping for a type of unity that would be more inclusive. Fatah, for example, was working towards such a plan. Al-Sulh criticised this in 1971, partially in suspicion of the groups' motives. He seems to suggest that these plans were an effort by Fatah to maintain dominance over the PLO.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, internal disagreements also caused complications. Al-Sulh notes that Fatah "had refused to consider that the PFLP was a respectable organisation and that it deserved to enter as a party in meetings with Fatah."<sup>15</sup> Such conflicts within the PLO was a consequence of the continuing second place position of the PFLP to Fatah, as well as the solidification of Fatah's power. Furthermore, Fatah's domination further revealed the lack of unity present within the PLO. While unity was seen as essential to most, the type of unity present at that time—or at the least the calls to unity—frustrated some.

Still, there were suspicions that the attempts at unity amongst the factions, particularly later in the period, were merely efforts for certain groups—or one in particular—to gain control by complicating the workings of the PLO. Al-Sulh explains, "unity with the Popular Front was avoided by widening several of the organisations... which required an endless number of organisations in the PLO that must be part of the unity."<sup>16</sup> Along with the widening of the meaning of unity, both within and outside of the PLO, fragmentation and factionalism also exacerbated the weaknesses of the Resistance, as well as the ideological reach of the

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<sup>13</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 145.

<sup>14</sup> Al-Azm, "al-Muqāwimah al-Filasṭīniyah fī waq'dahā al-rāhin," 57.

<sup>15</sup> Munh al-Sulh in: Al-Azm, et al., "al-Muqāwimah al-Filasṭīniyah fī waq'dahā al-rāhin," 57.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

intellectuals. This speaks to the tension between the intentions of the intellectuals and what they were able to carry out within their factions, as well as between the intellectuals and the PLO as an organisational entity. This is evident in the formation of groups such as the Rejection Front in 1974. Such marginalisation was both put upon them and self-imposed. This issue of marginalisation and its effects on the intellectuals and the Resistance in general will be discussed further in the next chapter.

The struggles between regimes and the Resistance created further divisions within the Resistance. What Black September did was create a stronger divide between the masses and regimes as well as between the PLO leadership and the more marginalised groups. The PFLP says the following in regards to what the battle with Jordan represented to them:

As to the first point we emphasize that our battle with the Jordanian regime is a political and military one, with the Jordanian and Palestinian mass on one side and the regime on the other. This is not the same battle claimed by the PLO leadership. The later's [*sic*] battle is the negation of the true battle. The leadership's "battle" is over the occupied territories (West Bank and Gaza). These territories need a furious struggle for their liberation to take place, and this is not perceived to take place very soon. What is possible to take place is the proposed political settlement. As such there is a battle on who is going to receive the lands under the conditions implied in the settlement—a step that even this leadership can not [*sic*] claim to be in service of the revolution. The 'battle' then is not over liberation but over participation in the

settlement; on who is going to recognize Israel through resolution 242 (the basis of the settlement) in return for the occupied territories.<sup>17</sup>

As the period progressed, the gap between the factions continued to grow, and the development of the PLO into a statist governing body became increasingly evident. The position of the regimes would also become clear, through their eventual choice to support Resolution 242.<sup>18</sup> This is precisely what the PFLP and many of the intellectuals had feared, particularly since the agreement viewed Palestinians only as refugees. Regardless of the PLO's overall stance against Resolution 242, the differences between the factions continued to grow as did Fatah's position as the powerful group. Arafat's hold over the group also began to be increasingly evident, causing many to question how sincere Fatah was in efforts to achieve unity. The PFLP's understanding that a revolutionary struggle was further and further away, increasingly resembled their reality. Nonetheless, plans were not made to fully face this problem.

*'National' unity, consolidation of power, and a narrowing struggle*

Al-Sulh considers that Fatah's treatment of the PFLP played a role in creating the issue of national unity. He explains: "The issue of national unity launched from a specific reality, which was that Fatah had refused to consider that the Popular Front was a respectable organisation and that it deserves to enter as party in meetings with Fatah. They avoided unity with the Popular Front by widening several of the organisations."<sup>19</sup> This view, however, is not shared by

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<sup>17</sup> PFLP, "Palestine Bulletin," (1974), 1. Location: La Contemporaine, Paris, 2016.

<sup>18</sup> Syria conditionally accepted it by 1972, Egypt after the 1973 war, etc.

<sup>19</sup> Al-Sulh in al-Azm, et. al., "al-Muqāwimah al-Filastīniyah fī waḍ'ahā al-rāhin," 57.

Quandt. In his opinion, Habash was one of the few that Arafat respected. Quandt also expressed the view that Arafat purposefully allowed for multiple parties within the PLO. He explains: "When I started studying the Palestinians, I wondered why Arafat had to put up with that, or why he chose to put up with it. And I think the answer is that each of these smaller groups had potential support from one or another Arab government."<sup>20</sup> Quandt thus adds balance to Sulh's point. While the factions did compete for power, and while Fatah dominated this competition, it was in Arafat's interest to at least work to maintain decent relations with the other factions.

In considering al-Sulh's view, Fatah arguably contributed to the demise of a strong resistance front and the rise of a movement which was in danger of representing the regimes from which it drew funds and military support. Tensions between Fatah and the PFLP thus grew, causing the PFLP to continue to redefine its tactics and relationships with regimes and well as the Palestinian Resistance. It wrote in 1974:

The state of retreat in which the Palestinian revolutionary movement finds itself because of the heavy blows at it, especially in Jordan—together with the stagnation of the Arab national revolutionary movement which could provide support for the resistance movement in its battle against all curtailing and liquidationary schemes — summarise the dominant objective and subjective conditions at both the Palestinian and Arab levels. These conditions demand tactical consideration when we define our position towards these regimes.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Quandt, interview.

<sup>21</sup> PFLP, "P.F.L.P. Bulletin," 4. Location: La Contemporaine, Paris, 2016.

The PFLP's perception of Fatah's willingness to work with Arab regimes spoke to the nature of the conflicts between factions, particularly in the latter part of the period. On an individual level, intellectuals were also aware of this aspect of Fatah's policy. Al-Sulh explains: "the Arab reality and the world reality refuses to treat the Resistance except on the basis of it being a regime."<sup>22</sup> Such a perception of the PLO would only grow with time, particularly with the consolidation of power with one group, as well as the recognition of the PLO by the UN in 1974. For al-Sulh, the loss of a focus on the *fedayeen*, combined with a growing perception, in the Arab states and globally, of the PLO as a regime, threatened the work of the Resistance; a guerrilla struggle, as originally desired, appeared further and further away. The ambitions of the intellectuals required strict adherence to ideologies that seemed to be continually ignored. In general, there was a palpable disconnect between political ideologies touted and what was needed within a revolutionary framework. This is particularly evident within Fatah's framework of non-intervention, which was highly criticised by many outside of Fatah.

In considering the respective points made by Alloush and al-Sulh, we see some of the strategic differences that intellectuals had in their ideas of resistance. Alloush's point, that the regimes have no place in the resistance struggle and that there must be popular unity, contrasts with al-Sulh's point, that efforts at unity must be focused on the *fedayeen* rather than on as many people as possible. In essence, these are different ways of understanding mass mobilisation. These debates continued to challenge the Resistance and their understanding of the appropriate path to take, as well as to inform their treatment of the masses. Fatah, on the other hand, also seemed to take a different stance on unity for the purposes of resistance, in

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<sup>22</sup> Al-Sulh in al-Azm, et. al., "al-Muqāwimah al-Filastīniyah fī waḍ'ahā al-rāhin," 57.

which they openly included the Arab regimes in their discussions of resistance efforts, yet made a point of not intervening in these regimes' affairs. Such an approach would contribute to setting an agenda of working towards Palestinian liberation, but not towards a greater Arab struggle and revolution.

### **Ideology in Context—From Vanguard to Establishment**

One of the greatest challenges of vanguard political movements, is the extent to which they are able to put their ideals to practical use, this also, invariably, becomes a point of criticism. We see such challenges and criticisms evident in, for example, communism in the Soviet Union and Cuba. Alongside the more obvious point, that leaders of such popularly-focused movements tended to be from the upper classes, there are criticisms that the inability to enact the changes they saw as fundamental to their movements, displayed flaws and weaknesses in their ideologies and in the movements themselves. Whether it is the failure of meeting economic goals or the inability to unite and garner the support of the people who were being “liberated,” such mistakes allow outsiders to delegitimise the movement, not to mention it contributes to the swiftness with which the movement will lose its hold. In terms of this period in the Palestinian Resistance, the external perception of the movement's weakness comes not from Israel. Israel's targeting and killing of many Palestinian and Arab intellectuals, during this period, was proof of their fear of the movement's power. Instead, it comes from Arab regimes, which, aside from having a reason to dampen the Palestinian Resistance, likely saw weakness in the movement in terms of its fragmentation and inability to unite. This is not to say that differences in opinion were a problem in and of themselves, but rather that inconsistencies in the



ideologies—as pointed out by their various proponents—contributed to the overall decline of a vanguard movement and the rise of a statist entity.

In an environment where the intellectuals were trying to cling to their principles, one could argue that the Resistance drifted further and further from them. This section will discuss the challenges of creating a movement that adhered strongly to a specific ideology while navigating the political trials of the time. It will explore the criticisms that many of the intellectuals aired, in relation to this dilemma. In doing so, we come to understand the shift in perspectives that many of the factions and the intellectuals had in regards to these regimes. Increasingly, they understood them to be compliant with the major powers rather than partial to the Palestinian liberation movement. The policy of non-interference adopted by Fatah became a symbol of the inability of the movement to adhere to its principles. This brief section discusses how and why ideological concepts shifted and highlights how ideological struggles were often lost due to the politics of the time.

In *Shu'un Filastiniya*, Bilal al-Hassan challenges Fatah's strategy for a mass struggle by pointing out the contradictions in it, which he quotes from their texts. He states:

Does Fatah consider the Palestinian role to be complementary to the role of the Arab armies? Is the popular war considered complimentary to the Arab armies and their regimes? This is what is suggested in its writings. And so the reader will be struck with amazement when he reads—after this outpouring of positions that speak of the special and distinct Palestinian role or about a Palestinian role that is adaptable with the official Arab role—a third rhetorical stance which says that 'the Palestinian revolution

will extend as a pioneering Arab experiment to all Arab land in order to trigger a popular war against colonial and imperial bases and take over the reins of power from the hands of the traditional leadership'.<sup>23</sup>

Al-Hassan demonstrates the inconsistencies present in Fatah's plans for resistance. Such inconsistencies and ambiguities, along with a lack of concrete, consistent ideology, could work to the faction's benefit, in terms of gaining power in a constantly changing and pressured political climate. Fatah's multifarious policies in relation to unity and resistance were also complicated by its policy of non-intervention, bringing forth another contradiction—the impossibility of not intervening in the internal politics of Arab regimes while at the same time receiving help from those same Arab regimes. The Jordanian Hashemite Kingdom epitomised the type of leadership that the Resistance was hoping to defeat. Its dealings with Israel and general cooperation with them angered the Resistance. Without a willingness to intervene in the governance of Arab states, it was argued, the movement would be unable to grow.

Al-Hassan discusses the frustration of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), at the continuing nationalist slant of the Resistance. Rather than pushing forward an agenda that would fulfil the claims that the Resistance, including Fatah, had made at the beginning of the period, it seemed that the factions, and the intellectuals, had fallen short. Al-Hassan notes the DFLP's frustration with the lack of progress:

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<sup>23</sup> Bilal al-Hassan, "al-Fāhim al-Filastīnī li-hazīmat ḥuzayrān," [The Palestinian Understanding of the June Defeat], *Shu'ūn Filastīniyah*, no. 3 (1971): 9.

And so the Democratic Front condemned the reality of the Palestinian Resistance arguing that this movement is of the same nature as the Arab Nationalist Movement. The public waited for it to forge a new path, but it ended with it being a captive of the ideology of the right and the petit bourgeoisie, and turned into a tactical paper compressed in the hands of the Arab regimes. So, it became a group in the front of the of the Arab armies. It will not move to a progressive position unless it acquires a revolutionary ideology, an ideology of the workers and the *fellaheen*.<sup>24</sup>

By the 1970s, there were consistent complaints from the intellectuals, in regards to the lack of progress and evolution within the Resistance. We can find in the factions' literature, calls to the Palestinians, telling them that they were the most essential element to the cause, and reaffirming the participation of the *fellaheen*, yet these calls and statements did not match the critiques of the Resistance's ideology, or lack thereof, found within the publications of the time, such as *Shu'un Filastiniya* and *al-Mawaqif*. Despite disagreements as to the direction in which the Resistance should go, it seemed increasingly clear that the PLO, and therefore the Resistance, was becoming part of the political establishment rather than pioneering a vanguard movement. Furthermore, a refusal to stand strongly enough against "reactionary regimes" revealed, to many of the intellectuals, a dangerous compliance.

*"Reactionary Regimes"—The Irony of Regime Support and the Consolidation of Conflict*

As'ad Abdul Rahman writes in *al-Hadaf* in 1970, "the reactionary regimes are inevitably against *fedayeen* work from the strategic angle and this fact is clear and natural and

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 15.

expected.”<sup>25</sup> At the same time that these regimes were keeping ties to imperialism, they were also supportive of the *fedayeen*. This was no surprise, as the actions of Jordan and Egypt in the Khartoum Summit also alluded to such an approach, as discussed in the previous chapter.

Despite being supportive of the Resistance and armed struggle, Arab regimes would continue to support it only to the extent that it was convenient and not a threat to their existence. This reality was a challenge to many in the Resistance, who were not comfortable with the irony of receiving support from regimes that were representations of what they were fighting against.

The DFLP, led by Nayif Hawatmeh, also perceived this danger, stating: “a resolution of the conflict [Black September] would mean that they [‘the petit bourgeois regimes’] would have to shoulder material, political, and military responsibilities.”<sup>26</sup> This statement builds on a longstanding DFLP view of Arab politics. For instance, rather than accepting the 1952 coup in Egypt, as something worth celebrating, it saw the coup as the continuation of elite rule over the masses. The defeat in 1967 exacerbated this view, as certain steps taken—by Nasser in particular—were seen as anti-status quo and therefore encouraging to many members of the Resistance community. Yet, if the Resistance were to follow the same route as regimes such as the Egyptian one, then hopes of a guerrilla movement would be lost. This is, in part, why al-Sulh underscored the loss of a focus on *fedayeen* unity as debilitating for the Resistance.

The intellectuals wrote extensively on this dilemma, making efforts in their articles (particularly those within factions’ publications), to keep the momentum of the movement

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<sup>25</sup> As'ad Abdul Rahman, "al-Ta'adud 'alá mashhad al-kifah al-Filasṭīnī al-musallāḥ wa azmat al-wiḥdat al-qawmīyah" [Plurality in the Armed Struggle Scene and the National Unity Crisis]. *al-Hadaf*, 1970, 10.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in: Clovis Maksoud, *Palestine Lives: Interviews with Leaders of the Resistance* (Beirut: Palestine Research Center, Kuwaiti Teachers Association, 1973), 91.

strong and to maintain focus on building a guerrilla resistance movement. The defeat of the Resistance in Jordan as well as the contested Rogers Plan in many ways demonstrated the changes in the ideological and tactical direction of the PLO. To understand those changes, consider this earlier quotation from the DFLP:

Our movement thinks that the struggle against Zionism as a colonialist force will rest ineffectual if it is separated from this threat against imperialism and its reactionaries in the Middle East. The socialists, Marxist-Leninists or progressive democrats must be capable of making an agreement for united action against imperialism and Zionism.<sup>27</sup>

By as early as 1969, this separation of causes was threatening to become a reality. The US-initiated Rogers Plan in 1969, which called for Israel to withdraw completely from Sinai, was rejected by Israel.<sup>28</sup> The Egyptian–Israeli War of Attrition also began at this time. The Rogers Plan marked the end of the war, as well as the beginning of a more open form of cooperation between Israel and Egypt. Sayigh explains that Nasser’s signing of the agreement was in part due to his frustration at “his Arab counterparts,” who he “had angrily accused...of imposing maximalist political demands on Egypt while offering inadequate practical support,” and he warned that “he would have to go his own way.”<sup>29</sup> The plan was criticised by the Resistance. The literature demonstrated the widening divide between Arab regimes and the Resistance, as well as the shift towards efforts that were solely diplomatic in nature. This step towards diplomatic approaches, meant to quell the tension and fighting between Arab states and Israel,

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<sup>27</sup> Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, "Publication du Front Democratique Palestinien," (Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, 1967). Location: La Contemporaine, Paris, 2016.

<sup>28</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 144.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 145.

was an approach that departed significantly from what the Resistance had hoped for—a struggle to liberate Palestine and the Arab world. The Rogers Plan and its acceptance symbolised the more visible policy of Arab states towards Israel. This policy was one of acceptance, thus defining the conflict as one about Palestine and Israel and not about a larger, mass movement to liberate the Arab world. This was followed by the institutionalisation of the Palestinian struggle; the PLO's statist qualities and its opponents will be discussed further in Chapter Five. Many of the intellectuals were concerned with the direction the PLO was taking, as agreements such as the Rogers Plan seemed to ignore the wishes of the PLO and particularly its leftist factions, such as the PFLP, which worked to rally the masses against such agreements.<sup>30</sup> Ultimately, it led to actions such as Black September. While the PLO was largely against the Rogers Plan, there were still factions and individuals who were more willing to work within the confines of such diplomatic efforts in the future. This could be considered the beginning of the left's marginalisation.

## **Commitment**

Aside from being unable to effectively reach the masses, the intellectuals questioned the Resistance's commitment to the revolutionary cause. This can be broken down into two branches of questioning: were the problems of commitment within the political nature of the factions or within the ideological proposals put forth by the intellectuals? This leads to the question of the extent to which the intellectuals saw the factions—all of them or select ones—

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 256.

either as political entities, devoid of intellectual output or as part of the revolutionary cause. In dealing with these inter-related questions, this section will cover commitment, as defined at the beginning of the chapter, and how the revolutionary causes desired by many in the Resistance became complicated, in large part due to the political decisions made by those who simply saw no other way. While oftentimes these had to do with factors somewhat out of the Resistance's control, these complications also reflected the limitations of the role of the intellectuals, and the extent to which they could create and maintain a holistic movement that would push the Palestinians and the Arab world to create systemic change. Furthermore, it reflected a possible lack in judgement on the intellectuals' part, in terms of the extent to which they could work within the bounds of their political realities. Criticisms made by the intellectuals, centred on the extent to which other intellectuals and the factions were committed to the larger cause, revealing contradictions within some of the factions' strategic plans.

### *A Holistic Movement*

Entities such as the Palestine Research Center (PRC) would be part of this vanguard, holistic movement. In terms of working to build a holistic movement, we can turn to some of the criticisms the intellectuals made in regard to this. Points made by Alloush and Kamal Nasser, about the need for a movement that goes beyond armed struggle and demonstrates the importance of developing all aspects of society, including cultural ones, also raises questions about the function of the factions, their limitations, and the limitations of the intellectuals in transforming these factions into holistic entities. Furthermore, some of the intellectuals' stress on the importance of scientific and military development within the region

also seemed to be neglected. This topic will be discussed in further detail in the coming chapter. In this chapter, it is discussed more briefly in order to give a sense of the extent to which intellectuals were hoping for radical, holistic change in their society.

Al-Azm, in fact, blames this lack of development as one of the reasons for the Defeat: “There is no doubt that Arab underdevelopment in production, technology, science, planning, and leadership is the latent source, to a great extent, of the lack of this sort of practical effectiveness among the Arabs today.”<sup>31</sup> We can see, however, that despite such views, the intellectuals were unable to craft the necessary changes to make this a reality. One such reason is the unique position of Palestinian intellectuals and resistance members, who were operating as exiles from surrounding countries or in their own land. Another reason, had to do with the inability of the intellectuals to construct a coherent plan for resistance that would lead to constructive discussions on technological and scientific development. Lastly, discussions of scientific and technological development were stymied due to the focus of the PLO at the time, which was working to gain a political foothold on the global stage. These discussions simply were not the focus of those with more power, much to the chagrin of some of the intellectuals.

Such discussions were made more difficult by the tensions that existed between factions and even individuals. Some also felt that Fatah’s dominance, and within it, Arafat in particular, stymied intellectual efforts to produce work and ideas dealing with creating a balanced resistance movement. Anis Sayigh, devotes much time in his memoirs to this point. For him, it is

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<sup>31</sup> Sadik al-Azm, *Self-Criticism after the Defeat* (London: Saqi Books, 2011), 55.



Arafat who imposes restraint on the intellectuals' output of the PRC.<sup>32</sup> Al-Azm recalled that he oftentimes (although not always) had to write in *Shu'un Filastiniya* under a pseudonym in order to be able to publish in it.<sup>33</sup> Quandt, however, remarked: "In Arafat's best days [referring to the 1970s and 1980s], he wasn't just acting on his own judgment, he also would consult...with these two, or three, or four people in his inner circle...There really was something like a collective decision-making."<sup>34</sup> This decision-making, nonetheless, was likely taking place within Fatah.

### *Armed Struggle, Mass Struggle, and Commitment*

Chamberlin discusses how the Resistance positioned itself as being part of a Palestinian-led, Arab-supported, 1960s-styled revolution that would liberate Palestinians and also the Arab masses from colonial and imperial forces. What is missing from his analysis, however, is that this goal, while perhaps shared at the end of June 1967, did not remain shared. Just as the Palestinian issue was used by Arab regimes to gain legitimacy, armed struggle was used by factions to do the same. This is why many of the intellectuals criticised Fatah's policy of non-intervention, while still maintaining their allegiance to armed struggle. This not only demonstrated a contradiction in their policy, but also a hesitancy in their strategy that put into question, in the minds of the leftist intellectuals, their dedication to the Palestinian cause, and even more so to the larger cause of Arab liberation. Therefore, while their commitment to armed struggle was not in question, their commitment to an anti-colonial, anti-imperialist

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<sup>32</sup> See an example here, in which Sayigh describes the factionalism that he found Arafat brought to the PRC, as well as Arafat's implied view that the PRC did not have much to do with the revolution. Anis Sayigh, *Anīs Ṣāyigh 'an Anīs Ṣāyigh* [Anis Sayigh on Anis Sayigh] (Beirut: Riyad El Rayyes, 2006), 292–93.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Azm, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 5 January, 2016, Berlin.

<sup>34</sup> Quandt, interview.

struggle was questioned with increasing intensity as the period progressed. As discussed in Chapter Three, the commitment to armed struggle caused many to ask just how committed the intellectuals were to other aspects of the cause. The inherent contradiction is that while committing to armed struggle, commitment to the greater cause—liberation from colonialism and imperialism in Palestine, the establishment of a democratic state, and the subsequent revolution of the same vein in the region more broadly—appeared to be lost. Nonetheless, the discussions of revolutionary plans went forward. Lastly, commitment to armed struggle also raised the question as to its short-term goals as well. Aside from being an effective means of working toward goals of liberation, some, like Yasin al-Hafiz, perceived calls for popular, armed struggle to be potentially counter-productive. They saw it as an inevitable path toward the involvement of regimes, who were far more advanced militarily.

What remained was armed operations without a clear goal, leading to ideological ambivalence and ambiguity. Furthermore, and perhaps more poignantly, the factions' reliance on finance and weapons from Arab regimes—the same regimes that had begun to be considered as “reactionary” by much of the Resistance—caused many to criticise the Resistance's commitment to a struggle against, not just Israel and Zionism, but also against imperialism.<sup>35</sup> They considered the increase in reactionary regimes to suggest a decrease in support for what was supposed to be a mass struggle. Rather than maintaining a mass struggle which would propel the Resistance forward onto the political scene while keeping its revolutionary characteristics, some of the intellectuals began to perceive the continual rise of

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<sup>35</sup> As'ad Abdul Rahman, *al-Hadaf*. 1, no. 24 (1970).

reactionary regimes as a major factor in contributing to the evolution of the PLO, and a refusal to fight against this would create great problems.

Al-Hassan points out another contradiction in Fatah's policy of non-intervention in other states' affairs, by noting that while Fatah stated that Arab people from each country "are directly responsible for their affairs and their national struggle" in order to bring their struggle to the next levels of nationalism, the faction did not hold themselves to such a commitment.<sup>36</sup> To al-Hassan, the fact that Fatah received support from Arab regimes (as did all factions at one point or another), demonstrated that they were supporting those regimes, by it inadvertently or blatantly. In other words, such a stance should mean that "the Palestinian people are directly responsible for liberating Palestine," however Fatah is welcome to receive help from Arab regimes.<sup>37</sup> Such support always comes with strings attached, particularly when intervening ideologically in internal affairs of Arab states would directly threaten these regimes' existence. This is potentially another reason that some like al-Hafiz were hesitant to even call for popular struggle, as they perceived that it may inevitably lead to the over-involvement of Arab governments, therefore stripping resistance efforts of their ideological foundations.

Al-Hassan quotes Fatah as stating the importance of the participation of the Arab nation in terms of "capital, arms, and men," adding that "the next stage will widen to our Arab brothers to stand with their brothers on the frontlines of the fight inside our occupied lands."<sup>38</sup>

He remarks:

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<sup>36</sup> al-Hassan, "al-Fāhim al-Filastīnī li-hazīmat ḥuzayrān," 8.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

[I]n addition to funds and arms, [the] Arab contribution in the Palestinian battle can be summarised by volunteers in fighting and not in the struggle in order to prepare Arab conditions to be at the level of a liberation battle, because arriving at that level is ideological intervention in internal Arab affairs.<sup>39</sup>

Al-Hassan also points out that in distancing itself from the internal affairs of Arab regimes, the idea that the people of the Arab nations would prepare themselves for a larger, national struggle, could not come to fruition. Other groups, such as al-Sa'iqa, were also accused of intervening in the internal affairs of Arab regimes. When asked by Clovis Maksoud of the legitimacy of these claims, Sami al-Attari responded:

Such an image is based on the misconception that the military facilities of al-Sa'iqa are in fact the facilities of the Syrian state. This is the result of a campaign by those seeking to liquidate the resistance, who say that al-Sa'iqa is being used as a means of interference in the internal affairs of other Arab regimes.<sup>40</sup>

Despite many being against non-intervention, those who were for it could make the argument that intervention did not necessarily mean hindering the progress of the Resistance's ultimate goal, but instead increasing the power of Arab regimes.

If the purpose of armed struggle was to gain political respect, ensure that Palestinian voices were heard, and participate in a larger, mass armed Resistance movement against imperialism, then these elements were at risk of being lost. Furthermore, beyond Fatah,

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Attari cited in, Maksoud, *Palestine Lives*, 138.

changes in the style of armed operations also contributed to losing the masses and changing the nature of armed struggle from *fedayeen*-styled resistance, with the involvement of the *fellaheen*, to armed groups such as the Black September Organisation, which operated internationally, such as during the Munich Olympics in 1972. Arguably, this direction, coupled with the failure of the Resistance in Jordan, alienated the masses. Kamal Nasser pointed out the difficulty that the Palestinians would face in fighting the Israeli army on their own.<sup>41</sup> For many, this problem would be solved with mass mobilisation. A. W. Said states: “one cannot equate the Palestinian people with this huge world force. The essential factor on our side of the equation is the masses of the entire Arab nation who, aided by every movement for world liberation, constitute the only power equal to the challenge.”<sup>42</sup> He saw the Arab masses’ role as “the product of human, geographical, historical and logical factors. The Palestinian masses are the spearhead; the Arab masses are the spear itself.”<sup>43</sup> The quelling of the struggle in Jordan also demonstrated the Arab regimes’ hand in limiting the power of the masses.

### *Commitment to Non-Interference*

The fight in Jordan represented Palestinian efforts to solidify their movement as a broader struggle against imperialism in the region. Its failure, then, represented the limits of the movement, which is why al-Azm called this failure “the original sin” of the Resistance.<sup>44</sup> Many found Fatah’s stance of non-interference to contribute to the Resistance’s inability to

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<sup>41</sup> Kamal Nasser, *Kamāl Nāṣir: al-athār al-nathrīyah* [Kamal Nasser: Literary Works]. (Beirut: al-Mu'asasah al-'Arabīyah lil-Dirāsāt wal-Nashr, 1974), 267.

<sup>42</sup> Maksoud, *Palestine Lives*, 143.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Sadik al-Azm, interviewed by Katlyn Quenzer, 5 January, 2016, Berlin.

defeat the Jordanian regime. Arguably, this complication of the Resistance's broader goals further alienated the masses, as did Fatah's policy of non-interference. Al-Attari of the al-Sa'iqa organisation, pointed out:

But the same deficiencies which alienated the Palestinians likewise alienated the Jordanians [the Jordanian masses], in particular the largest group's [Fatah's] slogan of non-interference in the internal affairs of the Arab regimes, which included the Jordanian regime. Thus regionalist tendencies were increased with the formation of various Palestinian professional and workers' unions; the long common struggle against the regime was in this way broken and fragmented.<sup>45</sup>

Fatah's commitment to non-interference not only contradicted the goals of the Resistance, it also, in the context of Black September, alienated branches of the Resistance and the masses who were backing the Resistance's stance in the battle with Jordan. The results of Black September also revealed another element of the danger of factionalisation—it created not only a fragmented resistance, but also a fragmented population. This, arguably, could have been a reason for the Resistance's failure to effectively reach the masses. Furthermore, the larger reach of the movement—against colonialism and imperialism—was undermined by more locally-focused goals. This is also evident in the breaking up of groups that had been aligned with the Palestinian Resistance but would now focus on more local concerns.

Al-Attari describes this phenomenon:

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<sup>45</sup> Maksoud, *Palestine Lives*, 132.

After the dispute [between the left of the Resistance and Fatah]...at the beginning of 1970, they [Fatah] suggested meeting with the left of the resistance, regardless of the possibility of polarizing *fedayeen* action. In fact a coalition did take place between ourselves and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Partisan forces [volunteers from members of communist parties in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq], in a progressive list against Fateh in the elections of the Union of the Workers of Jordan. A similar thing happened in the election of the General Union of Palestinian Students (Damascus Branch). These are two of several incidents that could be cited. While the al-Sa'iqa leadership was agreeing with Fateh on various topics and plans, the bases stuck to their position contrary to the leadership's instructions (other groups had similar experiences): and stemming from their meetings with the left of the resistance, the groups confronted the Jordanian regime on several occasions. They refused the leadership's interpretation of self-defence, took the initiative themselves instead of running after events, and abandoned the slogan of non-interference.<sup>46</sup>

Interference thus occurred in spite of Fatah's proclaimed intentions. To many, non-intervention, particularly while regimes were agreeing to peace plans with Israel, was proof of why such a policy was flawed. This would only become more evident with the absence of the Resistance, in Sadat's 1973 war to take back the Sinai Peninsula.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 137.

## Mass Action and Enhancement of Political Consciousness

While there was agreement that the Resistance had failed, early on, to connect with the masses, this was not necessarily considered to be due to an overall gap between the intellectuals and the general public. The ideological views of the intellectuals reflected their class basis. It is thus significant that this group of intellectuals had arisen from somewhat lower classes than those intellectuals of the late Ottoman period. In tandem with being influenced by global leftist trends during the time, there was a belief held by the intellectuals that they had simply spent more time with everyday Palestinians. At the least, they shared experiences in occupation and exile. Such experiences must have informed the intellectuals' ideological leanings and affirmed their connection to this mass struggle. These declarations of strong connections became ironic when, by 1969, the intellectuals criticised their disconnect from the masses. The desire to have a revolutionary programme carried out and led by the masses brings out what could be considered a classic contradiction of the intellectuals and their position in society: they did not represent those whom they claimed to represent.<sup>47</sup>

In this section, I challenge the extent to which the intellectuals were able to be amongst those whom they represented. Furthermore, I challenge the notion that it was the *fedayeen* who were the heart of the movement. This will be explored in order to demonstrate what seems to be a fundamental irony in the role of the intellectuals, that is perceiving the masses as the leaders of the movement yet placing themselves in a position of power over them. This

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<sup>47</sup> There also appears to have been a disconnect between the *fedayeen* and the masses more generally, raising the question of whether or not these were seen by the intellectuals as different groups altogether. This is significant because it puts into question the priorities of the Resistance.



builds upon Chapter Three, in which was discussed the intellectuals' acknowledgment that the masses were not being properly informed as to the intentions of the Resistance. Additionally, it will be challenged further in Chapter Five, when I further explore the notion that the ideas the intellectuals brought forth did not necessarily suit the population. This chapter, explores the extent to which the masses were disempowered and what this says about the role of the intellectuals and whether or not they contributed to this. Furthermore, it explores what this phenomenon reveals about the position of certain factions and their role within the Resistance.

### *The Rise of Fatah and the Decline of Mass Struggle*

The decline in focus on the *fedayeen* and collective armed struggle, contributed to the consolidation of Fatah's power within the PLO and hence over the Palestinian revolutionary cause. While some were disillusioned with the perception of the PLO as a regime, it may have worked in the favour of Fatah, whose position as the strongest faction in what was increasingly becoming a political body that functioned like a regime, would potentially allow them a special place when dealing with external parties. Thus, despite the PLO gaining power, it was Fatah that ultimately gained the upper hand. Such consolidation and concentration of power worked against the collective, left-leaning armed movement desired by the Resistance. While the relationship to the masses was one that was pivotal to the success of the Resistance, and the bonds between these two groups was made clear in magazines published by the factions, there seems to be a disparity between those claims and reality. This is evident not only in what the intellectuals said, but also in the consolidation of power within the hands of one group.

### *The Heart of the Movement—the Masses or the Intellectuals as Agents of Change?*

Many of the intellectuals lamented that the relationship between them and the masses was not being managed properly, thus leaving the masses in the dark in terms of the direction of resistance and their important role in it. Aside from the difficulties in creating a mass movement, caused by Arab regimes and other states, there was also blame placed on the intellectuals themselves. They understood the importance of this time in history as it was happening and the pivotal position of the masses. Thus, their inability to mobilise them in an effective way, and the intellectuals' realisation of that, begs the question as to the extent to which they were genuinely understanding the masses and their needs. The rhetoric of the factions and the PLO more generally was that of an anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist struggle, connected to the larger struggle of the Third World at that time. Those who believed in that cause and helped to shape it saw themselves as on the oppressed side of history, yet they could not reach the masses effectively.

Arab regimes were aware that a larger revolution would hinder or perhaps even put an end to their power. Tensions between the Resistance and Arab regimes, such as those sparked during Black September, further exposed this fundamental irony. A.W. Said notes:

To look toward Palestine is at the same time to view the liberation of the Arab masses and a change in their circumstances. The struggle to liberate Palestine presents the Arab world with a crisis. And in an atmosphere of crises the state institutions are stripped bare. The nature of the present conspiracy is exposed through the

fragmented structure and superficiality of governments that remain aloof from the masses and, since it entails their own downfall, oppose the liberation of the people.<sup>48</sup>

Aside from explaining the division between the revolutionary movement and the Arab regimes, he blames the Arab regimes rather than the Resistance for alienating the masses. What remains unclear is the extent to which this irony involves the regimes' distances from the masses and the extent to which the intellectuals and upper levels of the Resistance were also distant from the masses, therefore making such a revolution difficult to attain.

In creating a mass movement, it was hoped that Palestinian liberation would turn into something greater, contributing to a change in the social order of the region. While the intellectuals claimed that the masses were the heart of the movement, the lack of information given to them, as expressed by many and noted in the previous chapter, puts doubt to this notion that the masses were indeed leading the movement. The intellectuals involved at this point, as noted in Chapter Two, had already brought a certain amount of social change to the movement, particularly in being from a somewhat lower class than those who were organising during Ottoman times. Still, their distance from the masses who they hoped to inspire, stood in the way of the evolution of the movement. To A.W. Said, it is the masses more than the intellectuals who are the agents of change. He states that "the Palestinian Arab people" should be "a vanguard for inspiring the energies of the Arab masses for further defining its momentous advance toward liberation."<sup>49</sup> Despite difficulties in rallying the masses and maintaining a cohesive movement, many intellectuals and factions remained not only allegiant to this cause,

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<sup>48</sup> Maksoud, *Palestine Lives*, 143.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

but also convinced that it was working. The PFLP claimed that despite the Arab regimes' control of the masses, there was still an "emergence of new class forces composed of vanguard workers, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals and a wide progressive sector of youth. These forces have, on various occasions, expressed their awareness of the dynamics of the ongoing struggle and of their primary role in this struggle."<sup>50</sup> This speech is striking, given that the existence of such "new class forces" was not as obvious as claimed.

In addition to revealing the difficulties that the intellectuals faced in creating a mass movement, the inability to rally the masses also puts into question the extent to which the factions and the intellectuals were divided in their approaches to resistance. The PFLP's comment about a "new class force" reveals two major points in regards to the factions, rather than in regards to the intellectuals' work, namely that the factions' publications represented efforts to reach the masses, yet oftentimes did not reveal the reality on the ground. They, after all, were meant as means to disseminate the ideologies of the factions. Secondly, while the PLO worked to demonstrate that they were supporting the people, this stance seemed to allow the organisation itself to gain popularity, regardless of whether or not the masses were supported and represented. Thus, in some sense, the intellectuals' and the PLO's work could have, ironically, disempowered the masses. While the claim of the importance of the masses and their role as the *fedayeen* is present in factions' magazines, the extent to which it represented reality is questionable. At the end of the period, it is Fatah that seems the most empowered.

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<sup>50</sup> PFLP, "P.F.L.P. Bulletin," 4. Location: La Contemporaine, Paris, 2016.

Al-Attari explains the importance of the movement to the masses, both in terms of what it represents to them as well as their importance in providing the necessary fuel for the movement to take place,

It was the masses themselves who took the initiative and flocked to the resistance movement. It constituted for them the first glimmer of hope since their initial dispersion. They were the ones to be subject to continual attacks from the enemy, and this convinced them irrevocably of the necessity for armed struggle...But there was another reason for our people to turn to the resistance. They did so as an emotional reaction, or as an expression of resentment against the ineffective Arab regimes, who had been unable to win a single battle or fulfil a single promise of the many they had made to the Palestinian people; this applies in particular to the Jordanian regime.<sup>51</sup>

Despite this claim, the factions were unable to garner enough support to create the type of mass movement they had envisioned. While al-Attari captures the intellectuals' frustration at the Arab regimes, the unsuccessful nature of many of the factions shows that they were fundamentally unable to cater to the needs of the masses. In short, this suggests that the intellectuals were never truly able to understand the needs of the masses, something that will be discussed further in Chapter Five. Arafat, however, was able to garner support from various levels of society, a tool that is strikingly similar to the style of leadership similar for example, to the powerful families in the Mandate period. Quandt describes this:

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<sup>51</sup> Maksoud, *Palestine Lives*, 132.

They [Fatah] had large numbers of people who were beholden to them, there was a kind of patronage relations that were fairly dense. Arafat could cover a fairly wide spectrum that included nationalists...big family leaders, big businessmen...some other conservative, more religious types. So you couldn't construct an alternative to the Fatah reality. There wasn't anyone else large enough or who had enough political support to challenge it.<sup>52</sup>

Despite efforts to move away from the traditional leadership, or the old guard, their style of governance still proved fruitful to Fatah.

Kanafani writing on the 1936–1939 Palestinian popular uprising, demonstrates the historical importance of the involvement of the masses in liberating Palestine.<sup>53</sup> This importance was clearly celebrated by the intellectuals, yet in the period of 1967 to 1974, it was still not achieved. Alloush emphasises the importance of their involvement, saying that “the participation of the population in the battle is the measure of the progressivism of the regimes.”<sup>54</sup> The Arab regimes' efforts to control the Resistance, therefore limiting their activities, demonstrated the decline of the type of popular struggle that the intellectuals had been working to build. Factions' publications continued to feature many articles related to the necessity and the work of the *fedayeen*. Still, the sense that the masses' were alienated became palpable as the period progressed. If the masses' involvement was vital to the Resistance's success, and if they were the heart of the movement, then it is also possible that the

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<sup>52</sup> Quandt, interview.

<sup>53</sup> Ghassan Kanafani, *Thawrat 36–39 fī Filastīn: khalfiyāt wa tafāṣīl wa taḥlīl* [The Revolution of 36–39 in Palestine: Background, Details, and Analysis] (Gaza: Markaz al-Dirāsāt al-Jamāhīriyah, 2004).

<sup>54</sup> Alloush, *Munāqishāt ḥawl al-thawrat al-Filastīniyah*, 12.

Resistance's failures were the fault of the masses themselves. If the intellectuals did find the masses to be the key to the success of the movement, then perhaps their involvement in directing them was beyond what was necessary. The intellectuals saw themselves as the agents of change, yet they claimed that it was the masses who were the true agents of change. The burden of resistance, it seems, was not appropriately shared between the masses and the intellectuals.

The anger that Black September caused would not easily disappear. Al-Attari states:

All this points to faulty analysis on the part of the resistance. It ignored the historical basis of the Jordanian national movement and failed to perceive its organic link with the Palestinian struggle. In fact the resistance tended to act as a substitute for the Jordanian national movement, denying it a role. Much of its behavior toward the Jordanian masses can only be regarded as ignorant or stupid. The miscreants were not publicly tried, a move which would have set an example and would have assured the Jordanian masses of the resistance's good intentions toward them. Things such as these, stemming from faulty comprehension, served the Jordanians well in its exploitation and intensification of regionalist tendencies, and the resistance movement did nothing to regain the confidence of the Jordanian people.<sup>55</sup>

This critique provides insight into another aspect of Black September which is often overlooked—the Jordanian masses. This also relates to the Resistance's inability to rouse all of the masses for the purposes of a larger struggle. Furthermore, al-Attari's strong language

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<sup>55</sup> Maksoud, *Palestine Lives*, 132.

highlights the tensions within the Resistance, particularly in regards to leading a larger liberation struggle. Al-Attari finds that the conflict with the Jordanian regime had the adverse effect of alienating not only the masses, but also the Jordanian National Liberation Movement, which was connected to the DFLP and conducted armed operations targeting the Jordanian government. The Resistance's perceived role as the leader of a large national movement, to al-Attari, left little room for the growth of a nationalist movement. This is the difficult balance that the Resistance was struggling to find. The policy of non-intervention had its merits in this regard, yet it arguably left the movement disunited. The Resistance was not capable of carrying out a mass struggle which would include both the Palestinian population and the Arab masses. Fatah's plan to leave the larger, regional struggle up to each nation was precisely what many saw as alienating to the masses. The PFLP suggested the following changes in order to ensure successful mobilisation:

The mobilisation of masses, in this sense (and with the aim of creating the strength necessary for changing the existing balance of forces to enable the resistance to find a way out of its crisis) requires a transformation in the style of our work and practice. What is required is not simply the repetition of the word 'masses' and verbal emphasis on the popular line of the party, but a change in the way we behave which aims at translating such words into action. We should make it a central tradition in our work to be always among the masses, to think with them and to subject our programmes to their interests, capabilities and energies.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> PFLP, "P.F.L.P. Bulletin," 1. Location: La Contemporaine, Paris, 2016.



Such efforts represent the distance that remained between the masses and the intellectuals. Efforts to fill this gap would become increasingly difficult, demonstrating the more bureaucratic direction that the Resistance would take as the period progressed. Furthermore, the PFLP's mentioning of the difference between words and action speaks to a fundamental problem that pervades the period. No matter the emphasis given to the importance of the masses, the actions of the factions and the disagreements over how to proceed with Arab liberation, not only created this gap, it also made it grow. As al-Attari notes, "Their unwillingness to be totally frank with the masses only accelerated the latter's [the masses'] disenchantment; it points to the primary fault—that the resistance had no unified and specific minimum program around which the masses could rally."<sup>57</sup> As discussed in Chapter Three, the lack of a unifying program was, to some, a great fault of the Resistance. Others saw this as evidence of the diversity of the Resistance and its commitment to democracy. Regardless, a more definitively negative aspect of it could have been the confusion and alienation it caused among the masses.

### **Conclusion: "Forces of Reaction" and Intellectual Agency**

#### *Two Possible Directions: Revolution or Statism*

In looking at these paradigms and the Resistance's relationship with the masses, we can better understand the limitations of the intellectuals' perspectives in affecting the direction of resistance. Such obstacles showed that Zionism was not the only force that would continue to pose challenges to the Resistance—the Arab regimes and the Resistance itself would

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<sup>57</sup> Maksoud, *Palestine Lives*, 132.

complicate the path to liberation. The conflicts between the factions and the Arab regimes also demonstrate the polarisation of the Resistance, in which the fight against regimes—Jordan in particular—was fomented by some groups and individuals, while others were more willing to cooperate with these regimes. Such divisions were an indication of at least two possible directions for the Resistance to take— armed struggle and the breaking down of regimes within the region, or an approach that would both consolidate the Resistance’s power and seek an approach to the conflict which centred on Palestinian liberation but not a larger Arab struggle. The quelling of the struggle with Jordan indicated a victory of the side that was willing to cooperate with these regimes. Sayigh explains the evolution that occurred within the PLO in the early 1970s, discussing Fatah’s consolidation of power and Jordan’s successful suppressing of the PLO:

The dichotomy [between Fatah and the other groups within the PLO] was only resolved between September 1970 and July 1971, in which period the successful Jordanian government offensive against the guerrillas effectively ended their ‘revolutionary’ phase and launched them into a period of intense ideological and organizational flux, during which the basis was laid for the later ‘post-revolutionary’ phase of state-building in exile.<sup>58</sup>

Arguably, the period of intense ideological influx had already begun to occur, as evidenced by the debates taking place within the Resistance and amongst the intellectuals. What would

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<sup>58</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 148.

come, was increased frustration at the state of Palestinian politics. Additionally, the move to Lebanon would further increase attempts to maintain a functional and united movement.

The events of the time, illuminate the difficulties placed on the intellectuals, in terms of maintaining the focus on the larger Arab liberation struggle. Furthermore, they demonstrate the extent to which these difficulties created challenges that pushed the intellectuals and factions of the Resistance further into their positions, ultimately polarising the movement. As we will see in Chapter Five, the extent to which this polarisation occurred tells us something important about the intellectuals' control over the movement and the ideologies that they hoped to develop for its success. On 28 September 1970 Abdul Nasser died, just "after chairing an emergency summit conference to deal with the confrontation between [the] PLO and [the] government in Jordan."<sup>59</sup> His death shocked the Arab world, and ushered in a new period in Egypt's and the region's history—the age of Sadat. Nasser's death brought an end to three years of domestic instability, that began with the June 1967 war.<sup>60</sup> With a new period of stability within key Arab states opening, opportunities for the Resistance to use the time period to their advantage and develop a movement that fought the status quo would pass. Existential threats that Arab states faced from the Resistance would begin to fade, and the Resistance's armed struggle would narrow and come to include activities away from which some of the factions were moving.<sup>61</sup> The rise of Sadat would radically change Egypt's approach to Israel,

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Habash explained that the main purpose of plane hijackings was to make the Palestinian issue known worldwide and to gain the attention of the West in particular. He claimed that once this was accomplished the PFLP stopped these activities. Ghassan Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad: Wadī'a Ḥaddād, Kārlūs, Anīs al-Naqqāsh, Jūrj Ḥabash* [Secrets of the Black Box: Wadie Haddad, Carlos, Anis al-Naqqash, George Habash] (Beirut: Riad el-Rayyes Books, 2008), 380-381.

inevitably affecting the PLO's approach as well. The consolidation of Fatah's power as the predominant faction would also create a more centralised approach to resistance. As Alloush noted:

It did not take long until the Organisation's leadership went to Fatah...despite the presence of conflicts and contradictions that weaken and strengthen. This was due to the result of an intensification of Arab contradictions, or its dilution...and because of the power conflict of the different factions both within the Organisation and at the broader Palestinian level.<sup>62</sup>

Alloush's comment captures the frustrations of those who were within the PLO but not part of Fatah. It was these intellectuals who thought that Fatah's dominance was adding to the layers of complication present within the Palestinian Resistance.

The intellectuals thus became increasingly critical of the progress of the PLO. Diplomatic efforts by Arab states also frustrated attempts at a revolutionary process. As noted in the PFLP bulletin:

It must be clear that we are presently facing a liquidation attempt from Zionism and imperialism and the forces of reaction in the Arab world. As a result, we are trying to pursue our work in an underground, clandestine manner and converting our open organizational framework into an underground apparatus, in order to protect the gains of the revolution and to secure an upward development in our struggle...Moreover,

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<sup>62</sup> Naji Alloush, *Fikr ḥarakat al-muqāwamat al-Filasṭīniyah (1948–1987): naẓrah 'aāmah* [Thoughts on the Palestinian National Movement 1948–1987: General Views] (Bīr Zayt: Lajnat Turāth Bīr Zayt, 1993), 8.

while we are in the midst of an armed struggle, these regimes have in general accepted the 'peace solutions' proposed by the imperialist powers.<sup>63</sup>

The Arab regimes became known as "reactionary forces," due to what many in the Resistance perceived as an inability to take a stand against the forces of imperialism which pervaded the region. Efforts to make this perspective clear to the public can be found in factions' publications and other media outlets. Overall, the intellectuals saw that the goals of their struggle would be increasingly hard to obtain, in large part due to political factors of the time. Some even saw that the difficulties they faced in achieving their goals were compounded by the Resistance's own inadequacies. In the midst of these difficulties were assassinations of some of their own, all to be discussed in the forthcoming chapter.

What has been uncovered in this chapter, is the complicated relationship between the factions and the intellectuals. This is present within the differences between factions' magazines and the intellectuals' articles published elsewhere. Aside from contributing to fragmentation within the factions, this also led to the polarisation of viewpoints. Al-Attari explains:

Because of its deficiencies, the resistance movement was unable either to absorb this popular tide or to channel it along the correct lines. The individual resistance groups were continually disputing among themselves over many basic important issues, that is, raising the slogan of non-interference in the internal affairs of the Arab regimes, the

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<sup>63</sup> PFLP, "The Collusion of Imperialism and Arab Reaction," in *PFLP Bulletin* (1973), 1. Location: La Contemporaine, Paris, 2016.

nature of the relationship between the resistance movement and the Arab liberation movements.<sup>64</sup>

What further exacerbated this was the changing of regimes within the Arab world, which both forced changes in the PLO's general approach towards resistance and hence changes in the factions' stances on the PLO. Changes within the Resistance occurred remarkably fast. While 1967 began with the promise of opportunity, by 1970, the Resistance had not only faced the challenges of defining their cause and confronting their perceived coloniser, they had also entered into a battle with an Arab state as well as an ideological struggle within the Resistance itself.

### *Limitations of Agency*

In studying the complications in actualising their ideologies and in creating the larger Arab revolution, the ironies and contradictions present in the Resistance during the time period are made clear. These include an inability to compromise and an often stark difference between what was said and what was done. Along with the obstacles posed by the time period, the ironies and contradictions explored, bring out the burdens placed on the intellectuals in devising an ideological struggle. In dealing with this burden, the intellectuals were unable to divide tasks amongst the entire Resistance, adding to the challenge of creating an organised, successful resistance.

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<sup>64</sup> Maksoud, *Palestine Lives*, 132.

Constraints of politics, the difficulties of armed struggle, and the lack of clarity in messages to the public all posed obstacles to the success of the Resistance. Furthermore, these obstacles and the Resistance's reaction to them and infighting compounded the difficulty of transforming the Palestinian revolutionary struggle into a holistic, Arab revolutionary struggle. In other words, there was, present in the Resistance, a disparity between what was said and what was possible. This demonstrates a shortcoming in the role of the intellectuals: that is, that they were unable to fully marry words with actions. Furthermore, it also suggests another shortcoming—an inability to work within the constraints of their reality. We also see a conflict between their intentions to remove themselves from the grip of regimes, yet their inability to do so, given their overall reliance on them for support. In terms of external factors, we can see that the regimes in the region proved more powerful than the intellectuals and the PLO, hence their defeat in Black September. Furthermore, countries outside of the region, such as the United States, still maintained more influence over Arab regimes than did the PLO. Lastly, the stateless nature of the PLO made addressing concerns of building a movement that would care for the scientific and technological needs of Arab society difficult.

While, as noted previously, the intellectuals understood the importance of the time period as one that held the promise of great positive change, a challenge that remained was striking a balance between managing the constraints and exploiting the opportunities of the political conditions of the time. They struggled to recognise at what point political negotiations were necessary, while holding fast to the goals of resistance. Some groups, Fatah in particular, tried to work with the times by introducing a policy of non-interference. This, however, led to contradictions in the basic principles of the movement. Others, seemed to hold on so closely to

Arab liberation as an immediate goal that it heightened the concerns of Arab regimes that were not willing to tolerate any threats to their existence. This situation was compounded by the alienation of the masses, who, supposedly the heart of the movement, were caught between these two extremes. While the PLO's intent was to free the masses, it proved difficult given the direction in which the organisation itself was going. The strong grip that Fatah had on the organisation took it further from its original path of mobilisation of the masses.

The intellectuals' modes of understanding resistance, provided a framework that oftentimes was at odds with what was happening. Despite the disjuncture present in this, many understood that this was occurring and called for new tactics and stances against Arab regimes in order to fight against it. Political differences amongst them, conflicts with these regimes, and the domination of Fatah would lead to further disagreements and polarisation amongst factions and the intellectuals, all to be discussed in Chapter Five. The ironies present within the Resistance's plans, along with external factors, created an environment in which the intended path of resistance was different from the present realities.



## Chapter Five:

### Banalities of Resistance—Critiques of the Left

*It so happens that the unpreparedness of the educated classes, the lack of practical links between them and the mass of the people, their laziness, and, let it be said, their cowardice at the decisive moment of the struggle will give rise to tragic mishaps.*

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

In the previous chapter, I discussed the challenges facing the intellectuals in building a revolutionary movement and in defining and embodying their roles as revolutionary actors, exploring how these challenges developed as the period progressed. I also discussed the ironies and contradictions present in the movement's efforts at total revolution; efforts that took place despite receiving support from the same governments within the region that such revolution would see overthrown. In this chapter, I focus on the intellectuals' decline from 1970 until the end of the period in 1974, understanding this decline in terms of the intellectuals' failures. These failures can be understood in light of both the intellectuals' own criticisms of the Resistance and the criticisms of others in regards to them. It was the intellectuals' ideas and initiatives of popular resistance which set the period of 1967–1974 apart, and it was these very ideas and initiatives that came to fail by the end of the period. I use the term banalities to denote the way in which discussions of resistance, and its enactment, became mundane. Rather than creating the type of change that they had hoped for, the PLO came to represent

the status quo. We can see this, for example, in the direction in which Arafat and Fatah took the PLO.

This chapter looks at the inconsistencies that contributed to the decline of the anti-colonial aspects of the Resistance and limited the impact of the intellectuals during the latter part of the period. I discuss critiques of the leftist intellectuals, making comparisons between their plans and Fanon's visions for anti-colonial resistance. In doing so, I highlight precisely where the intellectuals made their mistakes, as they worked to form an anti-colonial resistance movement. This is a pertinent point to understand, as the complaints the intellectuals had at the end of the period were as pressing as they had been at the beginning; by 1974 it was clear that the desires of the left would remain unfulfilled. This chapter exposes some of the criticisms made of the intellectuals by others, as they provide possible answers as to why their plans had failed.

As an example of the types of criticisms that are relevant to understanding the intellectuals of the time, and the left in particular, Ajami writes: "1967–1973 had its dreamers, those who thought that the world could be unmade and remade with a pamphlet, but on balance caution prevailed and the social order hung together."<sup>1</sup> While the intellectuals were concerned that their efforts were not reaching their populations, the cause of this was often blamed on infighting and their lack of efforts to speak, and speak clearly, to the masses. What seemed to be less of a focus but is no less important, is the notion that the intellectuals' ideas were out of touch with their reality.

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<sup>1</sup> Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice Since 1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 5–6.

Fanon's work helps to provide a deeper accounting for the intellectuals' failures, going beyond deeming their calls for revolution simply as half-hearted efforts for change. The opinion that they truly were anti-colonial actors has been perhaps most commonly held by the intellectuals themselves. I employ Fanon's work in this chapter in order to get a better sense of the intellectuals' shortcomings and missteps. This emerges out of the observation that they were not so much anti-colonial actors as they were becoming victim to the negative aspects of Fanon's notion of colonised intellectuals. By employing Fanon's work, we can more fully account for some of the fundamental flaws present in the intellectuals' ideas and plans and locate the cause of these flaws in relation to the three points of concern that comprise the research question: the shortcomings of the intellectuals, problems in the ideas they developed, and the complications raised by external factors. Fanon provides a missing link, in showing *why* these intellectuals failed as anti-colonial actors. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon makes accurate predictions as to the obstacles and difficulties that colonised intellectuals will face in their anti-colonial struggle, such as a lack of unity and coherent plans. In the introduction to this thesis, I discussed the overlap in Fanon's notion of the anti-colonial and the Palestinian and Arab anti-colonial intellectuals. In this chapter, I discuss Fanon's predictions of the types of obstacles the colonised intellectuals would face as well as their missteps and failures.

September 1970 marked great change for the Resistance, and the Arab world in general, due to the death of Abdul Nasser. Structural and political factors, as I will describe in detail below, also added to the intellectuals' marginalisation and inability to make the type of progress they envisioned. Al-Hout describes the shift that took place during this phase, which he designates as lasting from September 1970 until the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982:

First we had to go through the bitter stalemate of ‘no war, no peace,’ after which we witnessed the victory of October 1973. One year later, the Arab summit held in Rabat recognized the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

That led us to the United Nations and a new phase of diplomacy.<sup>2</sup>

While some, like al-Hout, celebrated the PLO’s new position on the world stage and saw this as an advancement of the Palestinian cause, others saw it as causing general harm to the Resistance. In particular, they saw it as a harm to the Resistance’s efforts to create a larger revolutionary struggle. As discussed in the previous chapter, the intellectuals were already frustrated by the hold that Fatah was beginning to have on the PLO and the Resistance more generally. This was a type of marginalisation that would continue to undercut their efforts.

Three areas of critique are particularly important to explore, due to their relation to broader anti-colonial struggles, as well as their ubiquity within the criticisms of the Resistance raised at the time: the left’s connection to Arab nationalism and continual struggle to either marry the two or separate them, problems with armed resistance, and the notion that their ideologies and ideas were out of touch with reality. While labelling the intellectuals’ efforts as a failure raises the question as to why these figures and their work, is given such focus in the first place, their failure to create an anti-colonial, revolutionary struggle—much in the fashion of Fanon’s colonised intellectual—were significant. Indeed, it demonstrated the limits of leftist ideologies and possibly the limits of such ideologies within the regional context.

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<sup>2</sup> Shafiq al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO: The Inside Story of the Palestinian Struggle*, trans. Laila Uthmān and Hader Al-Hout (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 119.

This chapter also sees a return to some of the themes and ideas that were present at the beginning of the period, and covered in Chapter Two. This is because, as the period came to a close, some of the points that were present at the outset come to the fore once again, with the intellectuals' goals fading to mere dreams. Given this circularity, in this chapter I also reflect on the possible reasons as to why the period came to end as it had opened. Ultimately, this tells us about how and why the intellectuals' roles changed and why their efforts ended in failure.

The first section lays the ground work for the chapter, covering contextual information that helps to explain the particulars of the end of this period. It also discusses some of the effects of the changes in the PLO on intellectual activity and how these changes marginalised the intellectuals. In the second section, I explore the criticisms surrounding the left and their uncertain connection to, nationalist ideologies of the time, working to demonstrate how conflicts between the intellectuals around nationalist ideologies, limited their power toward the end of the period. Despite expressing their disagreements with, and increasing separation from, ideologies of nationalism, many on the left remained somewhat attached to them. Fanon's focus on the importance of building a national consciousness, as discussed in Chapter Three, is also important to evaluate, when discussing the latter part of the period. As shown previously, by working to garner support and rally the masses, the intellectuals also discussed this idea of national consciousness, without necessarily employing the same terminology as Fanon. Their ultimate failure to garner broad support, raises the question of the effectiveness of their ideologies. This will be discussed in the third section, following on from a discussion of the shifting commitment to nationalism.

In the third section of this chapter, I will discuss some of the problems involved in creating and maintaining the approach of armed struggle within the Resistance, particularly by the end of the period. Furthermore, I question whether or not the approach to armed struggle actually pushed the movement to failure. Along with these measures came the changing political situation within the region, in part led by Sadat and his desire to remove Egypt from the Arab–Israeli conflict and forge a different path, both politically and economically, from that pursued by Nasser. Diplomatic approaches overtook armed, guerrilla resistance, leading the mainstream leadership of the PLO to also adopt such an approach, much to the chagrin of others within the organisation. These points compounded the already difficult task of finding a balance between implementing armed struggle to work towards liberation and building a movement with a complete ideology that could radically change the region, its culture, and traditions.

I will also be tackling the notion that they needed to change the mentality of the masses in order to progress the larger Arab revolution. In the fourth section, I focus on criticisms of the ideas that were proposed by the intellectuals and the possibility that they did not fit their context. As was discussed previously, the large disparity in ideas only added to the confusion of the period and likely made it difficult for citizens to hold on to any one idea and pursue it for the purposes of anti-colonial struggle. Beyond that, despite the efforts of the intellectuals to develop leftist ideologies and spread them to the general public, they were unsuccessful in doing so. While they stated that their inability to reach the masses was a large part of the problem, it is worth considering that the ideas they espoused did not speak to their audience, as was alluded to by Ajami in his *The Arab Predicament*. These criticisms will be tackled in

conjunction with some of the key points provided by the intellectuals that demonstrate possible areas of weakness in their work. Ultimately, I will investigate the extent to which this could have limited their overall impact during this time.

### **Polarisation and Pragmatism**

Sadat's rise to power and the 1973 war ushered in a new era of political strategy that affected the entire region. The diplomatic approach he took towards Israel, left the Palestinians isolated in any ongoing efforts at armed resistance. While the intellectuals were increasingly marginalised during this time, the end of the period saw a rise in targeted assassinations of them. Kanafani and Kamal Nasser, for example, were killed by the Israelis in 1972 and 1973 respectively. Despite the diminishing role the intellectuals may have had, the fact they were targeted in this way, demonstrates their importance in the eyes of their enemy. Thus, the intellectuals were not entirely marginal, yet it was increasingly unlikely that their ideas would become reality.

Sayigh describes this phase in the PLO's history as the post-revolutionary phase, which demonstrates the type of direction that the Resistance began to take. As the Resistance left the revolutionary phase (he sets this as 1967–1970) and enters a "post-revolutionary phase of (in this case neopatrimonial) state-building,"<sup>3</sup> the increasing power of the PLO on the global political stage demonstrated to many within it, the new potentials of the organisation. Former

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<sup>3</sup> Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949–1993* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 463.

US diplomat, William Quandt, summarised the evolving political situation of the PLO, stating, “you have a movement with an intellectual wing without much direct political experience, and an increasingly bureaucratised, rather corrupted mainstream that is beginning to act like a state-in-waiting.”<sup>4</sup> Quandt depicts some of the issues raised by the intellectuals in voicing dissent and general anger towards the political leadership of the PLO. This became clearer as the period progressed and groups and opinions became increasingly polarised. In general, the 1970s witnessed further fragmentation amongst groups, as well as an increase in what can be described as more extreme forms of violence in armed operations.<sup>5</sup> With the move from Jordan to Lebanon in 1971 came increased authoritarianism, as demonstrated by, for example, a “disinclination to hold elections within the civilian organization.”<sup>6</sup> Thus, at this point, from the perspective of the left and as alluded to in the previous chapter, the PLO increasingly behaved like a regime and less and less resembled the type of democratic organisation that they had hoped to create. This had a negative effect on intellectual work as well as on the possibilities for the intellectuals to take on their desired roles.

As Paul Salem notes, of those whom he calls the “the New Left”:

Within the Palestinian nationalist movement itself, the 1973 war marked the start of the PLO’s long journey toward accepting and negotiating with Israel. The New Left lingered on in the Palestinian Popular Front organizations, which now abandoned most

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<sup>4</sup> William B. Quandt, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 25 September, 2017, phone interview.

<sup>5</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 308–10.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 461.



of their orientation and concentrated on holding the militant leftist line within the increasingly moderate Palestinian nationalist movement.<sup>7</sup>

Salem captures the extent to which the PLO seemed to comprise two sides, a pragmatic side and an idealistic one. Understanding these as opposing sides demonstrates the extent to which views were polarised at this point. Furthermore, it demonstrates the power that nationalism held, above and beyond that of leftism. Rallying behind a more basic slogan of Palestinian nationalism proved to be more powerful than the more complicated and involved ideas of leftism—ideas that had also remained underdeveloped.

The 1973 war and Sadat's rise to power in general saw an abandonment of Arab nationalism, and the Palestinians. While the war itself "saw Arab solidarity at its peak...divisions set in that ultimately rent the wartime alliance completely asunder."<sup>8</sup> With his decision for war and then a peace agreement, Sadat chose to take Egypt in a new, state-first direction. For many of the intellectuals, and the PLO in general, this represents a type of betrayal, despite the initial positive reactions to the war.<sup>9</sup> This ultimately puts another hurdle in the path of the PLO, likely causing those at the top, and Arafat in particular, to have to choose a new path as well. William Quandt explains this well:

[Arafat] was a politician who realised that to survive in the circumstances that confronted Palestinians, in a post-1967 world, he had to be able to juggle many, many

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<sup>7</sup> Paul Salem, *Bitter Legacy: Ideology and Politics in the Arab World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 200.

<sup>8</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 319.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, the November 1973 issue (no. 39) of *Shu'ūn Filasṭīniyah*

different balls at the same time, and avoid having the contradictions of being on good terms with the Egyptians and getting along well enough with the Syrians...you know the whole gamut of Arab parties, each of which wanted to control the PLO required that he play multiple games.<sup>10</sup>

In the midst of these games, the intellectuals, with their ideal aims, were in large part lost. This was particularly the case with the changing regime in Egypt. Arafat worked to evolve the PLO's political policies, making them better-suited to the expectations of the major powers, even secretly telling the US that he had "a willingness to coexist with Israel."<sup>11</sup>

In 1974, the PLO issued its Ten-Point Plan. This was one of the first more public steps of the PLO towards an entirely different approach to the conflict, one that seemed to move away from larger goals of revolution. Al-Hout highlights that the most significant part of the plan was "the second clause, which called for 'the implementation of a national authority over any part of liberated or vacated Palestinian territory.'"<sup>12</sup> Under this plan, the PLO worked to become a national authority, and although they included armed struggle in their concluding statement, Sayigh comments that this was in part to "placate" the left.<sup>13</sup> While Fatah and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) agreed with the plan, "the Popular Front and all the others did not, and together they formed what was referred to as Jabhat al-Rafd (the Rejection Front)."<sup>14</sup> Habash describes that the PFLP initially agreed to the plan. He recalled that the only

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<sup>10</sup> Quandt, interview.

<sup>11</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 333.

<sup>12</sup> al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO*, 120.

<sup>13</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 342–43.

<sup>14</sup> al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO*, 120.

person who did not was Naji Alloush. Nonetheless, Habash states that with time, particularly when he discovered secret talks that took place between Henry Kissinger and Arafat, the PFLP refused the plan.<sup>15</sup> Sayigh describes the loss of the “idealism and élan of previous years,” leaving instead “indifference in the lower ranks...and cynical manipulation at [the] leadership level.”<sup>16</sup> This fits with what al-Hout describes of this point in the period: “In one seminar held by *Shu’un Filistiniya* magazine, the Secretary General of the pro-Syrian faction al-Saiqa, Zuheir Mohsen, declared that the 1973 war had transformed the Palestinian revolution ‘from romanticism into [sic] realism.’”<sup>17</sup> This view would not likely be shared, however, by the left. These approaches angered many within the Resistance, while others saw them as simply the necessary steps to maintain the movement. To them, leaving behind these ideals was a betrayal to the Resistance and a relinquishing to the powers that be. Al-Hout describes this well:

Going to the UN was not an easy decision to make. Some considered it to be a betrayal of the cause and carried banners condemning those that had approved it. It was a decision born of years of bitter struggle and sacrifice by the People of Palestine, especially during the preceding nine years.<sup>18</sup>

This decision can be considered the beginning of a new era in PLO politics, one that took into account political manoeuvres in relation to other governments, before it considered any revolutionary moves for the sake of Palestine or in adherence to its original goals. The splits in

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<sup>15</sup> Ghassan Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad: Wadī’a Ḥaddād, Kārlūs, Anīs al-Naqqāsh, Jūrj Ḥabash* [Secrets of the Black Box: Wadie Haddad, Carlos, Anis al-Naqqash, George Habash] (Beirut: Riad el-Rayyes Books, 2008), 385.

<sup>16</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 463.

<sup>17</sup> al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO: The Inside Story of the Palestinian Struggle*, 120.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 127.

the Resistance thus continued, further exacerbating the position of the intellectuals and the difficulties they faced in creating a revolutionary movement. Meanwhile, the mainstream leadership within the PLO centralised control, as a response to a number of factors, including the interventions of the USSR; political manoeuvrings of regional regimes; and a restive Palestinian opposition.<sup>19</sup>

These divisions became particularly widespread during this period, demonstrating the extent to which groups became polarised and tensions heightened. Furthermore, they demonstrated the way in which the original plans laid out by the Resistance, were changing. Rather than working for complete liberation, the goals were more pragmatic and focused on the short term. Long term goals may not, in the past, have been developed enough, but now they were considered by many to simply have been forgotten and replaced with goals that had little to do with either the anti-colonial struggle or a holistic, revolutionary approach.

Aside from the effects of the 1973 war in general, Egypt's victory, as noted by Faris, did not offer the Palestinian Resistance any tangible benefits.<sup>20</sup> Instead, it led to the signing of a peace treaty by Egypt and Israel, rather than steps that would directly benefit the Palestinians and their cause. Sayigh explains that due to the consequences of the 1973 war and the Egyptian-Israeli peace process, "the mainstream leadership [of the PLO] was obliged to retrench politically. The major response was to reinforce the statist transformation of the PLO."<sup>21</sup> Such a response increased tensions within the PLO and even within Fatah. At this point, the unique

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<sup>19</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 447.

<sup>20</sup> Hani Faris, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 19 August, 2016, phone interview.

<sup>21</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 447.

power and image once held by the PLO, as a vanguard, guerrilla group, waned. Furthermore, as Sayigh points out, “the historic ‘window of opportunity’ to join the peace process had closed conclusively, depriving the mainstream PLO leadership of any strategic initiative and leaving it struggling for direction.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, the PLO’s power as a group that not only championed Palestinian and Arab liberation, but also posed a threat to anyone who tried to block these goals, withered. While factionalism had been a reality of the time period in general, the steps taken by Arafat and Fatah to move towards a diplomatic solution that would not necessarily focus on regaining all of Palestine, and to move in the new direction taken by Sadat, the PLO became even more divided.

### **The Left’s Connection to Arab Nationalism**

As the idea that protecting at least part of the territory from colonisation increasingly became reality, the Resistance’s leftist intellectuals became frustrated at the state of the PLO and their marginal position within it and with the focus on simply creating a Palestinian national movement that would work to acquire any, single piece of Palestinian land. Hopes for a larger resistance struggle seemed further and further away. The left perceived this as problematic, in large part because they saw the direction of the PLO as one that would continue to reproduce the problems and defeats that were witnessed in the recent past. Abu-Lughod argues that the

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

left understood the “necessity” in moving away from Arab nationalism rather than trying to work with the nationalists or seek to reform their ideas.

Now matter how we tried to repair and patch the nationalist Arab regimes, it would have led to other disasters because the shift required in society is a fundamental one that destroys the social and economic establishments that form the basis of the existing regimes, and therefore [destroys] the mentality that controls the direction of the external battles related to Israel or others connected to external colonialism.<sup>23</sup>

Understanding the Arab nationalist regimes as fraught with problems, the left hoped to make systemic changes, the most challenging of which would be changing the mentality of the people. While Abu-Lughod locates this mentality as coming from Arab nationalism and likely the over confidence that came with it, such a change involves a deep understanding of the needs and desires of the population along with a keen understanding of what must necessarily be worked with, rather than changed. The left still needed to deal with the fact that despite the defeats faced by the Arab nationalists, their ideology received overwhelming support. Regardless, Abu-Lughod considered the root problem to be the region’s inability to overcome the leadership of the nationalists, as well as the seemingly dominant view that each country had its own people and liberation projects. He writes that,

The true conflict in the Arab region is not a conflict between Israel and the Arab states, it is a conflict between the Arab peoples with their different national identities and

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<sup>23</sup> Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, "Min al-Naksah ilá al-Nakbah: ta'bīrān li-hawādith jisām," [From the Nakba to the Naksa: Two Expressions for Weighty Events], *Shu'ūn Filasṭīnīyah*, no. 11 (1972): 56.

what Zionist society is based on and the reasons, including colonialist leaders and their supporters, that prevent the people from advancing.<sup>24</sup>

In not breaking from the status quo set by existing regimes, the left viewed the larger goals of the Resistance's project to be lost. This includes the concept that liberation was a Palestinian, rather than Arab, project. The position that the PLO needed to adapt its strategies with the changing times, was one that manifested itself in the political strategies of Fatah. Abu Iyad describes the changes that took place more generally after the October War, emphasising the role of Sadat's Egypt in making these changes and the transition to the use of diplomatic games that this period encouraged and the difficult position Fatah found itself in as a result of the new tactics of Sadat in particular.<sup>25</sup> While Khalaf describes the tensions that arose during this time, due to disagreements with the strategic changes, he was not particularly opposed to such changes. Others, however, perceived such steps to be a sacrificing of the Resistance's principles for political gain, that ultimately would move the Resistance away from its goals. The ramifications of this viewpoint, in many ways, speak to the complications that arose while the intellectuals worked to separate their movement from the nationalist movements that failed to bring victory in 1967. In looking at Fanon's work, this view becomes particularly clear. As discussed in Chapter Three, in order for the anti-colonial movement to be successful, a clear break from nationalism was needed. With the criticisms of the intellectuals' failures, we will see

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>25</sup> Salah Khalaf, *Filastīnī bi-lā hawīyah* [Palestinian without Identity] (Hebron: Dār al-Khalīl lil-Nashr, 1996), 127.

that some saw that their movement, in terms of the inability to enacting expressed political ideas, bore striking similarities to the efforts of Arab nationalists and Ba'athists.

The sheer power and popularity of Arab nationalism is likely a reason that groups did not entirely move away from it. Although 1967 demonstrated many of the deficiencies and failures of Arab nationalism, Nasser's popularity, for example, remained. As discussed in Chapter Two, in the 1950s, Arab nationalism provided great hope to the intellectuals and thinkers of the movement. Despite its failures, its popularity and the simplicity of its calls made it easy to grasp, contextually relevant and highly infectious. In short, regardless of the emptiness of some of its calls, as criticised by Ajami, Arab nationalism garnered much more public support in the region than, for example, Marxism ever did. Greenstein worked to account for this, explaining, "nationalism had proved more powerful than class in appealing to the masses; class discourse can be effective within national boundaries, not across them."<sup>26</sup> The Palestinian context in particular did not yield to the creation of a class struggle, demonstrating the difficulty in superimposing Marxist ideas onto the Palestinian and larger Arab struggle. This notion is supported by Ajami, and as Greenstein implies, could have also made it difficult to move away from nationalism.

Despite ideological differences, Ajami locates the frustration that gave rise to Arab nationalism as arising from the same source as that which gave rise to leftism: that is, the lack of effort by society as a whole to fundamentally change the region and to gain power by self-reliance and ingenuity. By 1967, the left perceived the Arab nationalists to have failed in this.

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<sup>26</sup> Ran Greenstein, *Zionism and its Discontents: A Century of Radical Discontent in Israel/Palestine* (London: Pluto Press, 2014), 195.



For Ajami, and other critics as well, such as Mohammad Jalal Kishk, it was clear that any hopes of the left, including the Palestinian leftist intellectuals, also failed. This will be discussed further in the third section. Nonetheless, the leftists were unable to develop any ideas that were as powerful as Arab nationalism and Ba'thism. This clarifies the reasons for their failures, as well as the reason why a simpler message of Palestinian nationalism, adopted by Fatah, for example, prevailed. Beyond that, the changing politics of the time ruled decisions and general strategies of the PLO, an organisation now dominated by Fatah and Arafat. In terms of lacking a development of plans to move away from nationalism, Greenstein asserts that the Palestinian left did not use "class effectively to overcome the attraction of nationalist ideology, so as to link people up across national boundaries." In the case of the Popular Front, for example, he states that the topic of classism "clashed with the nationalist agenda they pursued...But, particularly for the radical Left, which sought an alternative to nationalism, overcoming national divisions was crucial."<sup>27</sup> Thus, it is likely that the split from nationalism was never clear enough for some leftist factions to clearly distinguish themselves from the nationalists and provide a new ideology for their followers.

Given Fanon's notions of what makes a successful anti-colonial movement, the dominance of nationalist notions within the movement could be understood as a reason for the loss in voice of the left, as well as the Palestinian and Arab anti-colonial movement's failure more generally. To understand why this was problematic to Fanon, we can first understand what troubled him about nationalism, particularly during this time period, and why he saw it as

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 196.

an obstacle to anti-colonial resistance. In nationalism, he saw little potential for revolutionary change, stating: “when the nationalist leaders *say* something, they make quite clear they do not really *think* it.”<sup>28</sup> Here Fanon gives similar complaints as made by the Arab and Palestinian intellectuals about Arab nationalism after the 1967 war, who felt that Arab nationalism, in some ways, had offered false promises. We can see this, for example in al-Azm’s discussion of the overly-zealous comments of the Arab nationalists during the short time leading up to the June defeat, as discussed in Chapter Three. Despite this, the left did not develop a clear enough alternative to this ideology, as is evident in their own realisation that they could not speak clearly enough to the general population about their strategies. Fanon describes how the colonised intellectual, at times “over-stresses details and thereby comes to forget that the defeat of colonialism is the real object of the struggle.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, given the lack of a clear ideological line, in their context, the inability of the leftists to separate themselves from nationalism was due to being unable to create the right formula and conceptualisation of what would fit for the region and its people. Greenstein notes, “nationalism had proved more powerful than class in appealing to the masses; class discourse can be effective within national boundaries, not across them.”<sup>30</sup> As was discussed in Chapter Three, the intellectuals struggled to incorporate class discourse into their work, despite implementing leftist ideologies that relied upon it. Greenstein provides another possible reason as to why; without a state, it would be difficult to implement this type of struggle, as national unity of any sort was not a given. This may have been yet another reason that the simple message of Palestinian nationalism put forth

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<sup>28</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1963), 60.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>30</sup> Greenstein, *Zionism and its Discontents: A Century of Radical Discontent in Israel/Palestine*, 195.

by Fatah was more appealing than anything related to class struggle put forward, though not necessarily executed, by the more left-leaning groups.

### **Problems with Armed Resistance**

Along with other changes to the PLO at the end of the period was what appeared to be a shift away from armed struggle. While operations still occurred, the diplomatic line that Fatah pursued meant that it at least would not be a defining aspect of the movement. The guerrilla resistance of the PLO's early days was on its way out. This was understood and lamented by the left, who still affirmed, as Abu-Lughod lays out, that "the path to achieving this idea and to practically translating it in modern Palestinian society [requires] commitment to [the] popular revolution and that armed political struggle is the means to liberation and revolution."<sup>31</sup> For Fanon, there was a connection between armed struggle and the need to move away from the nationalist movements. To him, nationalist parties during this time, and in the Third World in general, were not serious enough about armed struggle because they were not serious enough about creating change.<sup>32</sup> As discussed in Chapter Two, this is also evident in the criticisms of the Arab nationalists, as the 1967 defeat took place in part due to the lack in preparedness of the Arab armies. Earlier, in 1948 and 1949, critics like Zurayk also found these problems to be in large part the reason for defeat at that time. His call for Arab unity, however, seemed never to occur in the way he had envisioned. By the middle of the period, ironically, much of the left also

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<sup>31</sup> Abu-Lughod, "Min al-Naksah ilá al-Nakbah," 55.

<sup>32</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 59.

criticised one another for being this way, as is demonstrated in the constant fracturing that took place in factions such as the PFLP. Furthermore, by the end of the period, particularly after the adoption of the Ten-Point Plan, this accusation was the opinion of the leftist intellectuals in regards to Arafat and Fatah more generally, when dreams of larger, revolutionary change seemed particularly remote. While it is possible that Fatah and Arafat's word were simply more powerful than the operations of smaller groups, it is also possible that their tactics were ineffective. Furthermore, while Arafat went to the UN and spoke of possibilities of peace if the international community would respect Palestinians' desires for self-fulfilment, Quandt points out that they were still providing support to more controversial armed operations, such as the Black September Movement's attack at the 1974 Munich Olympics.<sup>33</sup> This demonstrates the complexities and nuances of the changes that were taking place within the PLO at that time, leaving confusion as to the actual direction the PLO was taking.

Aside from Fatah's and Arafat's will, the state of armed resistance at the end of the period could also be seen to have been undermined by the intellectuals and their factions. Rather than focus on the ultimate goals of the armed operations, factions seemed to fight with each other in a race to see who could launch the most operations. This contradicted the very point of performing them; rather than being about using these operations to achieve long-term goals, they became about competition between the groups themselves. Abu Iyad discusses this in his memoir, noting that in 1970, "each group began to try to show that they were the strongest 'revolutionarily'."<sup>34</sup> Armed resistance's effect on the end of the period demonstrates

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<sup>33</sup> Quandt, interview.

<sup>34</sup> Khalaf, *Filasṭīnī bi-lā hawīyah*, 72.

the failure of one of the key elements of their anti-colonial, revolutionary struggle. Rather than being the triumph of the *fedayeen*, armed struggle spiralled out of the control of the factions and the Resistance more generally, becoming more of a weakness than an asset to the Resistance and its cause.

To the intellectuals, cultural output was an important element to nurture, because it was a way that could potentially change attitudes. Thus, a stifling of cultural activities created much frustration within the intellectuals' community. As discussed in previous chapters, Arafat was often regarded as the culprit. According to Sayigh, Arafat often chose his own people (from Fatah) to write articles for *Shu'un Filastiniya*, regardless of their expertise on the subject at hand.<sup>35</sup> With increasing tension and competition between the factions, Anis Sayigh reports difficulties in managing the PRC in part due to Arafat's overbearingness. This is particularly relevant in discussions of the latter part of the period because of the strength that Arafat and Fatah had acquired. With this, it was easier for Arafat to make the demands on the PRC that Anis Sayigh describes in his memoir. This, subsequently, increased tensions and resulted in a growing divide between Arafat—and Fatah, in general—on the one hand and, on the other, the leftist intellectuals. This discord contributed to the overall decline in the intellectuals' roles and in their ability to have power to enact the type of changes they desired.<sup>36</sup>

Aside from the criticisms that demonstrate the growing authoritarian side of the PLO and its effect on cultural output is the notion that the intellectuals themselves stifled any chance to allow for the cultural aspects of the movement to flourish. There are a few different

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<sup>35</sup> Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State*, 294.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 293.

thoughts as to the causes of this. One is, as Alloush points out, the notion that this period did not have the type of quality cultural output that those in it aspired to produce. To him, this in part had to do with the focus on armed struggle, which stymied the building some of the finer ideological points of the movement at the time. This leaves us with a sense of the extent to which this could have been better controlled by the intellectuals themselves by, for example, better maintenance of resistance strategies and the role of armed resistance within it. Rather than becoming entrenched in arguments regarding who was better in undertaking armed struggle—a problem which occurred from the start—the intellectuals would, plausibly, have been better off engaging in heavier discussions regarding how to maintain balance and control over armed struggle, in order to maximise the effectiveness of it and minimise the loss of its purpose within their larger liberation struggle. Evidence in support of this notion—that there needed to be more balance in Resistance struggle efforts—is also present in the limitations inherent in the more extreme forms of armed operations taken by the Resistance during this period. These diminished the legitimacy of the movement, externally, and strained the relationships between the factions and even between individuals, such as Haddad and Habash.<sup>37</sup> The fractured left yielded groups that became more extreme in their military actions, as demonstrated, for example by Abu Nidal’s split and creation of a new group, the Revolutionary Council, in 1974.

Walid Kazziha has expressed frustration at the way in which armed resistance was manifested in some of the factions, describing what he called “the culture of the Kalashnikov.”

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<sup>37</sup> Habash and Haddad experienced rift in their relationship in part over disagreements regarding armed operations. A sense of this rift, can be found here: Sharbal, *Asrār al-ṣundūq al-aswad*, 380-381.

He explains: “a Kalashnikov can make you a revolutionary, but it can make you a thug too.”<sup>38</sup>

There was, in his view in fact, both an over-indulgence in behaviour that went beyond armed resistance and a descent often into the realm of thuggery. He describes what also appeared to be a form of factionalism, in which the element of armed operations that was fundamental to the Resistance became so ubiquitous that it turned a powerful element of change into an obstacle for it. Furthermore, Kazziha felt that Fatah, more than the PFLP, did not make enough effort to protect and live amongst their people, despite their overwhelming presence among them, especially during times of warfare.<sup>39</sup> In short, for Kazziha armed struggle was clouding the overall goals and strategies of the Resistance.

One criticism of the intellectuals and this period in general is that armed struggle did not help to bring the results it promised. While it was seen as necessary in order for the Resistance to be respected and to be accepted as a negotiating partner, some found contradiction between this method and their expressed desire for a democratic, inclusive Palestine.

Greenstein writes:

From a conceptual perspective, the most two important innovations introduced by Palestinians in the post-1967 period, somewhat in contradiction with one another, were the assertion of the role of armed struggle and the identification of a new goal

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<sup>38</sup> Walid Kazziha, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 17 September, 2017, Cairo.

<sup>39</sup> Here, Kazziha seemed to be referring more to the days of the Lebanese civil war, particularly the 1970s and 1980s, though I include his point because of his desire to speak both generally and specifically about Fatah.

for the movement, that of a secular democratic state that would grant equal rights to all its citizens, Muslims, Christians and Jews.<sup>40</sup>

To Greenstein, fighting for a democratic state through armed struggle was a contradiction in terms because armed resistance was fought for the rights of Palestinians only; the normative ends—democracy and justice for the Palestinians—clashed. At its base, however, these ideas could be, and were, understood in some quarters as compatible, or at least synergistic, in means. Aside from taking up arms being used, more generally, as a means to gain a voice and respect, figures like Habash emphasised that armed struggle was simply the way they could liberate their people in the face of a well-armed enemy.<sup>41</sup> Still, operations themselves became confused, with hijackings, for example, undermining the larger intent: they only exposed Palestinian impotence in achieving their homeland, while also failing to move forward the plan for a single, democratic state. While armed struggle was one part of the resistance struggle, given that the other elements, such as clearly defined strategies and goals, were not as present, armed operations were bound to become directionless. On top of this, the competition between factions only added to the confusion of the Resistance and its goals and strategies.

While some saw that armed struggle had lost its meaning or was counter-productive, others worried that it was losing its place within the PLO, particularly with the newer protocols that came out of the organisation. To the left, the Ten Point Plan did not offer enough protection of armed struggle as an integral part of the anti-colonial movement. The thought

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<sup>40</sup> Greenstein, *Zionism and its Discontents*, 132.

<sup>41</sup> George Habash [Georges Habache] and Georges Malbrunot, *Les Révolutionnaires ne meurent jamais* (Paris: Fayard, 2008), 117–18.



that Arafat and Fatah were not doing enough to protect the integrity of the Palestinian cause as well as armed resistance is also evidenced by the Rejection Front and the general impressions of the left, as is demonstrated by Abu-Lughod's impressions in a more literary publication like *Shu'un Filistiniya* as well as Habash's and others' calls for refusals in meetings. As the then mainstream PLO was transformed with the greater changes taking place in the region, such as in Sadat's Egypt, the anti-colonial struggle increasingly became a dream. Furthermore, at the same time that Abu-Lughod wrote this, the mainstream parts of the PLO placed their focus elsewhere—less on technology and ideas for the general development of a nation, and more on diplomatic efforts that involved the establishment of a Palestinian state on any piece of land within the area.

While technological advances were, for good reason, at least discussed as critical to the advancement of the region as well as the Palestinian cause, the ideas that they proposed did not contain a clear plan with which to bring forth these type of advances. Al-Azm, for example, spoke of the importance of such changes taking place at the start of the period, but it is a point that is not as present in the leftists' work and general discussions. At the same time, however, such discussions were also not as present in the work of those who chose a more nationalist line or called simply for Palestinian liberation, such as Fatah. Some, nonetheless, perceived that the ideas proposed by the left would actually help in bringing forth these goals, perceiving them as going hand-in-hand with systemic change and anti-colonial resistance in the region. Abu-Lughod proposed a more practical solution to the problem of technological advancements: "repairing and patching to complete the technological strength will not work no matter the length of time, rather, the creative revolution undoubtedly must neutralize the technological

superiority of the enemy when it develops technological abilities [that hinder]...the revolutionary people."<sup>42</sup> At the end of the period, however, there are examples of neither technological advances actually taking place nor the development of an effective strategy to suppress Israel. This idea echoes what al-Azm, for example, wrote a few years earlier in *Self-Criticism after the Defeat*, stating: "There is no doubt that Arab underdevelopment in production, technology, science, planning, and leadership is the latent source, to a great extent, of the lack of this sort of practical effectiveness among Arabs today."<sup>43</sup>

### **Problems with Ideas**

In this section, I focus on the difference between what the intellectuals claimed to want and the circumstances with which they were living. This has been explored in relation to nationalism and its popularity with the wider public in the Arab world, and in this section I explore the criticisms, brought forth by those like Ajami, that the intellectuals' notions of leftism were out of touch with their reality. This supports the idea that the intellectuals' ideas did not fit within their context. Criticisms flagged in this section are not meant to prove the intellectuals wrong, but rather to raise possible problems with the intellectuals' ideas. This is particularly relevant when evaluating failures at the end of the period because it can provide important indications as to why the movement failed and why the intellectuals' roles diminished. I give particular

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<sup>42</sup> Abu-Lughod, "Min al-Naksah ilá al-Nakbah," 55.

<sup>43</sup> Sadik al-Azm, *Self-Criticism after the Defeat* (London: Saqi Books, 2011), 55.

attention to what appears to be the distance between the masses and the ideas they espoused, especially those promoted by the leftists.

The more general criticisms of the 1967 defeat and the Arab regimes remained valid and relevant to the region and its people, in part because these criticisms were general. Calls for stronger efforts at Palestinian liberation were understood. What perhaps was a greater stretch, however, were calls for Marxism. This had already undergone suppression by Arab regimes within the region, such as Nasser's Egypt.<sup>44</sup> This is significant because it demonstrates possibly one of the greatest obstacles the left faced in gaining momentum for their cause. While not all pushed for Marxism, Sayigh points out that those who did may not have been so genuine in their efforts after all. As an example he points to the PFLP's leftist claims during this time period and juxtaposes it with its statement in the 1980s that such claims were in large part meant to keep up with the times. He reports that its efforts at Marxism were farcical: "The decision to reconstruct the PFLP as a Marxist-Leninist party lacked both a political basis and concrete substance, and the front remained both 'rightist' and 'bourgeois' in this period, according to its own retrospective assessment in 1981."<sup>45</sup> Sayigh's findings seem to further substantiate Ajami's sentiment, described in the Introduction, that the revolutionary intellectuals at the time were not as serious about their ideas as they may have claimed and that efforts to actually apply the leftist ideas that they saw working elsewhere were hackneyed at best. While Sayigh's statement implies that the ideological claims of the left may have been peppered with lies or at

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<sup>44</sup> Of course, the Marxist groups were also seen as an enemy to Islamic elements in the region.

<sup>45</sup> Sayigh, Yezid. *Armed Struggle and the Search for State* (Oxford, 1997), 233.

best self-delusions, apart from Palestinian nationalism groups such as Fatah lacked much of an ideology, to guide their work, let alone a left-leaning one.

While the simplicity of their call for Palestinian liberation had its benefits, aside from being criticised for the ambiguity of their calls, they were criticised for carrying out armed resistance without having any sort of set ideology to support their plans. This could have encouraged the behaviour that Kazziha described as thuggish. Lastly, al-Azm's retrospective view of some of the leftist intellectuals of the PLO, also provides a different perspective on the intellectuals' political activities. For example, he writes of Habash:

George Habash, with his inflexible political stands, his uncompromising opposition to the partition of Palestine under any pretext, his chauvinistic background, his temporary desertion of the PLO at the head of a determined minority, his constant criticism of the PLO leadership for its opportunism, laxness and unprincipled politicking, his permanent inability to become the leader of the majority, his faith in a certain kind of elitist revolutionary violence, is the Palestinian mirror image of Jabotinsky (turned left-wing).<sup>46</sup>

Here, we are faced again with the notion that they were not really revolutionaries in the spirit of the times at all, or that if they were, they had taken their ideas to such an extreme that it

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<sup>46</sup> Sadik J. al-Azm, "Palestinian Zionism," in *Is Islam Secularizable? Challenging Political and Religious Taboos* (Gerlach Press, 2014), 109. Jabotinsky (1880-1940), originally from Russia, was a founder of the right-leaning Revisionist Zionism. He fought for the creation of the State of Israel, emphasizing that it should have a Jewish majority. Shaul Arieli, "The Palestinian Question: Ze'ev Jabotinsky and the Ethics of Zionism," *Haaretz*, 17 April 2016.

was no longer possible to consider them “revolutionary intellectuals,” but rather ideologues. This provides another possible reason for the failure of the left: their lack of ability to compromise left them too unflinching to survive the period.

Wrapped up in the issue of Marxism is the point of secularism which it contained. This may be one reason that these calls did not speak to a large audience. The issue of secularism is not one that is typically discussed as a criticism of this period, and in part due to that reason, it deserves discussion. While this thesis remains focused on the leftist movements within the PLO, the element of secularism within their political ideology also affected their reach amongst the Palestinian populace.

In contrast, we can see the popularity of Islam in Palestinian society, and in relation to resistance, by looking, for example, at Izz ad-Din al-Qassam. Beverley Milton-Edwards explains: “The failure of the notables to achieve legitimacy opened the path for ideological interlopers like Sheikh Izz ad-Din al-Qassam to encourage the empowerment of peasants through political Islam.”<sup>47</sup> Thus, early on popular struggle had Islamic connections. The strong identification Islam held for the people continued. In a 1960s–1970s study of Palestinian social life, conducted by Joel Migdal, we find throughout his analysis references to the many Muslim-majority villages.<sup>48</sup> In the same volume, Shimon Shamir discusses the way in which West Bank refugees identify themselves: “It could be seen clearly from their statements...that that Islam is inseparable from their concept of national community and that they expected to live in a

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<sup>47</sup> Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), 11.

<sup>48</sup> Joel S. Migdal, ed. *Palestinian Society and Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014). See especially, Book II, Part One, “The Palestinian Village,” with contributions from Gabriel Baer (Chapter 1); Ylana N. Miller (Chapter 2); and Shimon Shamir (Chapter 3).

community that was predominantly Muslim.”<sup>49</sup> Considering the trouble that the intellectuals faced in rallying the masses, and of course, the refugee communities, Migdal’s observation, which is also temporally pertinent, provides a large clue as to why the intellectuals could have faced this challenge. It demonstrates a potential negligence of something that was important, at the very least, to the understanding of what compels one to fight.

While Nels Johnson demonstrates in his book, *Islam and the Politics of Meaning in Palestinian Nationalism*, that the PLO did use religious rhetoric, there is no evidence in the literature that the PLO can be defined as a religious organisation. Johnson’s book does, nonetheless demonstrate that it is not necessarily that PLO members led entirely secular lives or did not find any motivation from faith.<sup>50</sup> For example, rather than fighting for the concept of “the Arab nation” or what came to be vague notions of Palestinian liberation, fighting because of obligations of one’s faith, could likely push many more to join the struggle. This conjecture is based on the popularity of al-Qassam, the general importance of religion in Arab society, and the continual struggle of the left, which they admitted, to rally the masses.

Despite the growth of Islamic movements (the Muslim Brotherhood in particular) in the 1940s in Gaza, and in the 1950s–1960s in Jordan and the West Bank, these groups were subject to repression from Arab governments. In Gaza, Nasser sought their complete repression.<sup>51</sup> Along

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<sup>49</sup> Shimon Shamir, “West Bank Refugees- Between Camp and Society,” in *Palestinian Politics and Society*, ed. Joel S. Migdal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 153.

<sup>50</sup> Nels Johnson, *Islam and the Politics of Meaning in Palestinian Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 2013). A good summary of this is found on page 65, in which Johnson writes: “[Islamic ideation] does not form a coherent indigenous theory of the Palestinian movement [in the period after the 1967 war], as it did for some groups in previous periods...Rather...Islamic ideation exists as highly ambiguous symbolic formulations which are susceptible to wide application...which can be both secular and religious.”

<sup>51</sup> Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine*, 57.

with which, by 1967, “in the West Bank the Muslim Brotherhood had been incorporated into the Jordanian structure and transformed into a moderate Islamic force for change.”<sup>52</sup> Hizb al-Tahrir (Liberation Party) was also entirely repressed in Jordan in the 1950s. Due to the all-encompassing nature of the party’s view and its complete rejection of nationalism, seen as incompatible with Islam and its notions of an Islamic state, Milton-Edwards claims that the party’s “vision jarred with the reality of the Palestinian community and most Palestinians were not attracted to it.”<sup>53</sup> Lastly, Nasser’s support of the PLO in conjunction with his distaste for both communism and Islamic groups left little room for the broad growth of ideas that did not fit with the status quo, making the path clear for Fatah.

We can see that on the Islamic front, there was a growth of ideas and great efforts to struggle against the same, repressive force identified by the PLO. The PLO’s factions, and the intellectuals in particular, were surely aware of this. Nonetheless, they held their line, seemingly ignoring the religious groups, and forged their own path. Ironically, despite the leftists’ complaints about the maintenance of the status quo and their inability to break it, in some ways, they were part of that very status quo. Their ideas, never pushing far enough into Marxism, nor fomenting a religiously-guided liberation struggle, were much more acceptable to regimes such as Nasser’s, which explains his initial support for the PLO in 1964 as well as his ultimate support of Fatah over other factions. Earlier, in 1965, Fatah had tried to engage and even co-opt the Brotherhood into their faction, an attempt that failed when Fatah refused to “commit itself to

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 70.

Islamic ideology,” as was demanded by the Brotherhood.<sup>54</sup> Lastly, this again demonstrates why Fatah was able to flourish while other factions, though not entirely repressed, remained on the fringe. The leftists’ ideas, were not threatening enough to cause them to be repressed, yet at the same time their ideas were not normalised enough to be accepted by larger regimes at a time when a stateless organisation needed support, something Arafat keenly understood.

While the left criticised Arab society, seeing the Arab way of life as at least part of the reason for the Defeat, these criticisms blinded the intellectuals to those aspects of Palestinian life that were potentially important to the Resistance, and ultimately might have persuaded the masses to pursue change. We can find an example of such a criticism in an observation al-Azm makes of the revolutionaries themselves. He points out the lack of depth that the Arab revolutionary tended to have because, to him, their ideas were not revolutionary enough and were planted firmly within the existing ways of their society. He writes: “the Arab revolutionary youth...is a political revolutionary but,...he is usually a social, religious, cultural, [an] ethical, and [an] economic conservative.”<sup>55</sup> His observation seems pejorative, yet if religion is as central as Migdal’s work, for example suggests, then it is possible that the conviction of the left, to leave religion behind or to be silent on it, contributed to their failure. They were aware, to some extent, of this disjuncture, recognising the centrality of religion in the region. This may have prevented them from pushing too strongly on the leftist elements of their movement. The

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<sup>54</sup> Azzam Tamimi, "Palestine Question and Islamic Movement: The Ikhwan (Muslim Brotherhood) Roots of Hamas," *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies* 1, no. 1 (2007): 35.

<sup>55</sup> al-Azm, *Self-Criticism after the Defeat*, 78.



evidence of this is the general push for a society that would allow for the cohabitation of Jews, Muslims, and Christians, rather than one void of religion, such as in communist societies. Thus, we can see the way in which political messages from the factions became somewhat ambivalent. There remained many inconsistencies and unanswered questions as to how liberation would come to fruition.

Along similar lines was the question of “backwardness.” While some pointed to political and tactical problems as reasons for failure, others also bring out, as discussed previously, the lack of effort at creating a movement that would go beyond simply a focus on armed resistance and liberation of land, be it partial or complete. To them, a holistic change needed to occur that would bring out the cultural potentials of the society, along with technological ones. Without this, they understood efforts at liberation to be hollow. As we will see, some identified the defeats and lack of progress in the Arab world as a type of backwardness. Abu-Lughod addresses this, referring to “Arab backwardness” and what he saw as the leftist groups’ ability to actually face this head on by pinpointing the types of problems that led to the Arab Defeat.<sup>56</sup> Identifying the problems as related to this backwardness, however, raises some questions, particularly since the ideological alternatives provided by intellectuals do not seem to resonate as loudly as needed with the general population, be that due to a lack of effective conveyance on the part of the intellectuals or a lack of relevance of the ideas to the population. While this point is difficult to prove, it deserves to be raised because it calls into question the complaints of the intellectuals in relation to their society.

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<sup>56</sup> Abu-Lughod, “Min al-Naksah ilá al-Nakbah,” 56.

This question of “backwardness” is also raised in *Self-Criticism*. In the introduction to the book, Faisal Darraj explains that after 1948, “Arab fragmentation and the ‘colluding regimes’ took the blame, and were quickly overthrown by a popular movement, which brought regimes that promised the elimination of backwardness and fragmentation.”<sup>57</sup> Darraj, and Al-Azm, understood certain societal traits to contribute to the constant defeats suffered by the Arab world. This went beyond the over-confidence and lackadaisical ways that, as discussed in Chapter Two, had also been responsible for the defeat that they suffered. In seeking to understand this, Darraj asks the following question: “What makes Arab intellectuals, from Najib Azuri to Taha Hussein and from Constantin Zureiq to Yasin al-Hafiz and from Mahdi Amil to Fawzi Mansour and Saadallah Wannous confront a society that firmly combines defeat and backwardness?”<sup>58</sup> To Darraj, it was the rejection of democratic principles that heavily contributed to their backwardness. While the intellectuals claimed to work towards these principles, they lacked the capacity to do so. Furthermore, as we saw in Chapter Four, the authoritarian-like practices of certain elements of the PLO continued to stifle these efforts. Darraj makes comparisons between the viewpoints of Awad, al-Azm, Halim Barakat, Zurayk, and Taha Hussein in relation to what they identified as backwardness and its danger for society. He quotes Taha Hussein as saying: “colonialism is a lesser evil than an independent, backward country.”<sup>59</sup> Without the development that they saw as essential, struggles for liberation would prove futile, in their view. Yet, what is backward, of course varies. Darraj also points out that

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<sup>57</sup> Faisal Darraj, “The Persistence of the Defeat/The Persistence of the Critical Book,” in *Self Criticism after the Defeat* (London: Saqi Books, 2011), 23.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 28.

this type of discussion is one about “culture,” which reveals the subjective nature of the subject in general. It raises a question as to whether or not the intellectuals’ understanding of what was wrong was indeed accurate and whether this understanding was shared by the general population, given that these ideas did not seem to enjoy the widespread support that the intellectuals had hoped to garner. Al-Azm provides thought-provoking reasons for the defeat and the Arab world’s shortcomings, such as a lack of unity amongst the people of the region, a failure to work towards anything more significant than providing for oneself and family, poor acceptance of and preparation for combatting the colonial giant, Israel, and society’s general penchant towards finding the faults of the Arab world to be embedded in what amounts to Zionist conspiracies.<sup>60</sup> Traditions, in his mind, account for many faults in Arab society. He writes: “responsibility in Arab society still stops at the border of the family and has yet to include the nation as a whole or the homeland in all of its parts.”<sup>61</sup> Although written at the beginning of the time period, we see such a criticism carrying through and being relevant throughout. While the intellectuals spend much time discussing how to obtain unity amongst the people, they cannot seem to achieve it. To some, like al-Azm, the answer in part has to do with societal traditions. He also emphasises that without devising theoretical ideas and changing oneself, there is no revolution.<sup>62</sup> Such a notion is echoed by Fanon, who also envisions great change within the colonised society as it strives toward decolonisation. In discussing the working classes and their importance in a struggle that will eliminate the capitalist economic structure set by the colonisers, he emphasises the pivotal role the workers will play, stating that they

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<sup>60</sup> al-Azm, *Self-Criticism after the Defeat*, 51–54, 63–65.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 78–79.

“will struggle against obscurantist traditions, that will change old customs, and that will thus enter into open conflict with the granite block upon which the nation rests.”<sup>63</sup> Similarly, Hawatmeh stated: “The Palestinian people belongs to the underdeveloped world. This means that backwardness reflects itself in its culture, politics, technology, and class structure.”<sup>64</sup> These visions for change are much greater than removing colonisation from one’s nation, because it involves fundamental changes in the people that make up the society. Fanon and the Palestinian and Arab leftists envisioned such a change yet lacked a message that was both coherent and appealing enough to reach the masses, in part destining their movement to failure.

## Conclusion

By comparing the intellectuals, and the leftists in particular, to Fanon’s idealised view of an anti-colonial movement, we have come to understand some of the reasons for the obstacles that the intellectuals could not overcome. Fanon’s insistence that anti-colonial resistance must move away from nationalism, as well as his stress on the importance of armed resistance, and unity over the cause, can be juxtaposed with the struggles of the intellectuals to do just what Fanon had envisioned. While it is not possible to prove that, had they done so, their movement would have been successful, what we can glean from this comparison is that at least within the context of anti-colonial movements and strategies of the time period, the Resistance was

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<sup>63</sup> Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 109.

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in: Clovis Maksoud, *Palestine Lives: Interviews with Leaders of the Resistance* (Beirut: Palestine Research Center, Kuwaiti Teachers Association, 1973), 84.

moving further and further away from these ideas. This coincided with the rise of the PLO as an entity that resembled an Arab regime more than a radical movement calling not only for Palestinian liberation, but for regional and even global change. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, three factors were vital to critically analysing the reasons why a period of such promise ended in upset in 1974—the shortcomings of the intellectuals, problems in the ideas they developed, and the complications raised by external factors.

In terms of the intellectuals' shortcomings, any efforts at regional political reform failed. Hopes for a democratic institution continued to decline, particularly with the changes made by Fatah despite the disagreement of many of the groups, who at that point considered themselves to have been disregarded. While some, as discussed in Chapter Three, had considered that factionalism was simply a demonstration of pluralism and democratic principles that were emerging within the PLO, it appeared at this point to contribute to the unhinging of what was spoken of as a shared goal. The dominance of Fatah and the aforementioned political changes described by Sayigh is evidence of the authoritarian reality that began to manifest within the PLO. At the same time, however, the constant fracturing of factions also demonstrates a lack of compromise taking place within the organisation. In terms of discussions of technological advances, this area also saw little development, in large part because they simply did not devote enough energy to these calls for reform made by some. These are likely due to simple negligence—the call for such changes were not even made by all, as were, for example, calls for armed struggle—as well as it being a lower priority.

The secular element of their movement likely neglected large portions of their society, for whom religion was central to daily life. Without this element, it is likely that the intellectuals

would at the least miss the support of a great number of the masses. Overall, we see that there is much room to argue that the intellectuals, and the leftists in particular, did not provide a robust ideology and plan that resonated with the population. While demonstrating a shortcoming of the intellectuals, the lack of robustness in their plans and the highly secular nature of their ideas also demonstrate a way in which the intellectuals' ideas did not fit with their reality.

Nonetheless, to many, it was the intellectuals who remained at the forefront of establishing and maintaining a revolutionary ideology that would go beyond Palestinian liberation. Nonetheless, from Ajami's perspective as well as from Sayigh's historical analysis, the message is that the intellectuals' ideologies largely, and almost exclusively, existed on paper. In the following statement from Ajami, one can gain a sense of the enormity of the project being undertaken: "that they were living in a situation that would soon give rise to revolutionary politics: out of the debris of the defeat [of 1967] would emerge new people and new politics."<sup>65</sup> We can see from al-Azm's comment as well, that the existence of a revolutionary who embodied socialist ideas also seemed to not be present. To compound this problem was the distance that ideas like Marxism seemed to have from the population at large, as evidenced, for example, by the popularity that an ideology like Arab nationalism seemed to have over Marxism.

In terms of external factors, the 1973 war also brought about immense change for the Palestinian Resistance and the Arab World in general. Although initially understood as a victory,

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<sup>65</sup> Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, 86.

it came to represent further divides in the Arab world. Ajami laments the changes that had taken place in the Arab world, “traffic jams and inflation, growing inequalities, the wearing thin of patience and tradition, and the aftermath of an economic boom that has raised some men to new heights of grandeur and power and demeaned the dignity of others.”<sup>66</sup> Ajami parts ways with many of the intellectuals of this study, as he laments the loss of tradition while at least some of the intellectuals see it as a reason for the Arab world’s decline. Here, then, we find an inconsistency in the analysis of what is actually taking place and is problematic about the period.

While in the same year, the PLO had gained global respect, accepted as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, the intellectuals had begun to lose respect for the organisation and modifications of its goals. By 1974, the complaints and desires of the left remained as they were at the beginning of the period, leaving a question as to what power and impact the intellectuals had after all. With attempts at anti-colonial change left behind, statism within and outside of the PLO became reality. Despite the successes of the PLO on the global stage, for many on the left, these steps seemed regressive. Even with pushback from the leftist factions in the form of the Rejection Front, the PLO chartered a different course, bringing the period to a halt and the complaints of social and political life of the region—those discussed at the beginning of the period—to the fore once again. Lastly, the general marginalisation the intellectuals experienced within the PLO also represents a factor that was in many ways beyond their control, and hence an external factor. This could also be considered, however, their own

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 7.

doing: their perceived lack of relevance to the practical struggle, as well as the problem of disconnection with the masses, had a marginalising effect.

Armed struggle, at the end of the period, was somewhat put aside by the mainstream elements of the PLO, as evidenced by the Ten Point Plan, although Fatah never entirely stopped supporting armed resistance. This nonetheless created further distance between the left and the more widely-accepted, conventional elements of the PLO, which is significant because it once again demonstrated the end of an era and the delegitimisation of many of the intellectuals who had worked to create a larger resistance struggle. Their rejection of the mainstream elements of the PLO and their overall desire for more, radical change within the organisation and the Arab world was lost upon the PLO.

The diminishing role of the intellectuals at the end of the time period highlights the difference between what the intellectuals thought they could bring to the time period and what others thought the intellectuals could offer. The limited potential of the movement is thus revealed, particularly the lack of self-reflection and self-criticism that al-Azm, in *Self-Criticism after the Defeat* and Zurayk, in *The Meaning of Disaster*, identified as debilitating. Al-Azm remarked in his text: "I hope that enlightened Arab thinking will have...achieved a stage capable of considering criticism as the precise analysis that defines weak spots, sources of helplessness, and influences that lead to the presence of these faults and shortcomings."<sup>67</sup> Al-Azm's sincere criticisms were intended as a way to both wake up his peers, inciting what was hoped to be sincere self-reflection and change. Beyond simply demonstrating shortcomings, al-Azm worked

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<sup>67</sup> al-Azm, *Self-Criticism after the Defeat*, 33.



to show what he perceived to be the root causes of these criticisms. In other words, he showed Arab society how it needed to fundamentally change:

The issue, then, is not resolved by casting blame on the colonialism that created and established Israel, but in transforming the Arab people and society into effective powers capable of taking responsibility for confronting colonialism as embodied in Israel.<sup>68</sup>

Although al-Azm was more removed from the leftist factions of the PLO and had criticisms of them as well, he too spoke of the 1967 War and its aftermath not as simply a Palestinian problem but as a showcase for the weaknesses, systemic problems, and lack in accountability in the region at large. His points remain largely as recommendations rather than as changes that have already been made manifest. The frustrations he had regarding lack of accountability and will to create a revolutionary movement, frustrations that were so poignant at the time of the Defeat, seemed to remain by the end of the period, and as we will soon briefly discuss, beyond. The banal practices of those with power, of choosing to exist within the status quo set by external powers, preside over al-Azm's and others' frustrations and visions.

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 54.

## Conclusion

In this thesis, I have examined two interconnected research questions: What was the role of the leftist intellectuals within the PLO from 1967 to 1974, particularly in relation to anti-colonial politics; and what explains their limited impact during this period? These questions delve into the evolution of the Resistance—from the criticisms of Arab regimes after the Defeat, to the promise and opportunities of 1967; from the difficulties and fractures experienced during the middle of the period, to the ultimate failures at the close. These questions have revealed three possible areas in which the answer may fall: external factors which kept the intellectuals from being able to achieve their goals; shortcomings of the intellectuals themselves, which hindered their capacity to plan and undertake actions towards reaching their goals; and the ideas themselves. Through the themes of each chapter, as well as the chronology of the period, I have comprehensively explored the research question and systematically examined the relevance of the proposed explanatory variables.

Along with introducing the research question and variables, in the Introduction I provided a literature review and highlighted the gaps in the literature which this research fills. I defined “intellectual” and placed the term within the anti-colonial context relevant to this thesis. Connections were made to the work of Fanon and Gramsci, whose respective notions of the “colonised intellectual” and the “organic intellectual,” provided a foundation from which to understand the type of individuals on which this thesis focused.

Chapter One placed the research within the wider spectrum of Palestinian and Arab intellectual history. Understanding the work of intellectuals during the late Ottoman period as part of this larger intellectual history of the region, the chapter demonstrated how the intellectuals of 1967–1974 compared and contrasted to those working during this earlier time period. In general, intellectuals of the late Ottoman period came from a higher social class, and had more experience abroad, than those from 1967 to 1974. Nonetheless, the efforts to create publications, enrich society with literature and education, as well as general efforts at organisation, all demonstrated a continuity and a shared understanding of many of the aspects that would comprise resistance. Intellectuals of the 1967 to 1974 period embodied more of the “positive” potentials that Fanon understood to reside within the colonised intellectual—they were, arguably, more connected with their people and were more interested in connecting with other groups that were part of a global anti-colonial struggle.

Along with helping to place the intellectuals historically, Chapter One demonstrated the factors that can impede efforts at radical change, such as the involvement of external powers or of local people who are willing to work with these powers. It also demonstrated that even early on, intellectuals were working towards radical change in the region, yet the challenges they faced—not to mention their own missteps, as well as those of Arab regimes—proved great enough to inhibit the change they had envisioned. The Balfour Declaration, the partitioning of Palestine, and the Nakba all occurred in fairly rapid succession. Zurayk’s *The Meaning of the Disaster*, discussed in some depth in Chapter One, tackled this subject. Zurayk’s criticisms can be understood as a predecessor to al-Azm’s *Self-Criticism after the Defeat*, as both authors provided their peers with a critical view as to why these catastrophic events occurred.

In the second chapter, I discussed the rise of the PLO, its factions, and the leftist intellectuals within it. I focused on the significance of 1967 and the Defeat, in creating an opportunity for them to propel their movement forward and offer radical change for the region. The chapter also contextualised the movement as one that took place during a time in which anti-colonial, guerrilla resistance movements were taking place globally. These global movements provided much inspiration for the Resistance and the intellectuals in particular. Such movements, along with the newly-gained support from defeated Arab regimes, are examples of external factors that helped to form the intellectuals' understanding of their role as revolutionary intellectuals. What is evident, even in this early stage, is that despite efforts at unity within the PLO, factions quickly faced disagreement and the subsequent divisions that accompanied it. This lack of unity hurt the Resistance early on. The ideologies that the factions and the intellectuals who led them espoused also varied. Coming to accept that Arab nationalism had failed to bring victory to the region, many called for revolution in Arab lands and a democratic Palestine, while others affirmed alternative strategies and tactics.

Chapter Three introduced a range of paradigms by which to understand the various directions in which individual intellectuals and the evolving factions to which they belonged, wanted to take the Resistance. The plethora of ideas present, led to continued disagreements that left the movement directionless, at best, and fractured, at worst. Factionalism was as much an indication of the disunity of the Resistance as it was representative of the many ideas that came from its members. The lack of depth and foresight put into ideas was also a reason for the intellectuals' inability to develop their plans, demonstrating many of the contradictions within the intellectuals' strategies. This complicated the path to victory. Despite the reported

closeness of the intellectuals to the population, such as the *fedayeen*, and despite the variety of ideas found within the movement, the PLO and its factions still struggled to represent the population. This was a point that even the intellectuals understood to be one of their shortcomings. Despite these fundamental problems, efforts proceeded.

Chapter Four examined the growing problems within the Resistance as well as the problems faced externally, with Jordan in particular. Focusing on the contradictions in their plans, I demonstrated how the problems faced by the intellectuals contributed directly to the tensions in the movement. This also led to one, overarching contradiction—that the intellectuals seemed to know they were destined to fail, but went ahead, regardless, with promotion of their revolutionary plans. At this point, armed struggle targeted not only Israel, but also the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. In Chapter Four, I explored the contradictions between the plans the intellectuals were hoping to execute and the fundamental threat that these revolutionary ideas posed to the Arab regimes from whom they received support. An additional perception from some of the more left-leaning intellectuals was that the PLO was becoming increasingly regime-like. These multiple problems posed obstacles not only for the ideological direction of the movement, but also for the general survival of what many had hoped to be a radical Resistance movement. It is thus not surprising that the Resistance began to shift its direction, under the ongoing leadership of Fatah.

In Chapter Five, the downfall of the intellectuals is examined, along with the various criticisms that help to explain why this occurred. External factors such as Sadat's rise to power and the subsequent change in approach towards Israel, as well as Arafat's and Fatah's hold on the PLO, pushed the Resistance in a new direction that did not have space for the types of ideas

proposed after the 1967 defeat. Statism took hold, factions became increasingly polarised, and intellectuals were marginalised. The lack of clarity in the left's messages, and particularly the ambiguity in their calls for a Marxist revolution and the strong secular focus of their ideas, seemed to contribute to a general weakness in their work and strategies. Despite any lingering appeal of their messages, and despite resistance and opposition from dominant voices within the PLO, Marxism and the general calls for a leftist revolution did not have the same popularity that Arab nationalism, for example, had gained. Although Arab nationalism was also quite secular in nature, it posed far less of a threat to the religious than did Marxism. Armed resistance also became more extreme during the late part of this period, arguably detracting from the influence that more organised, and agreed-upon resistance could have had. Lastly, the ideologies the intellectuals put forward as well as their general notions of revolution did not fit the needs and desires of their population. Elements such as secularism and Marxism were, I propose, factors that alienated the very people they hoped to reach.

## **Themes**

A number of key themes have emerged from this research from which we can derive the significance of this time period, in relation to Palestinian and Arab resistance and intellectual history. In this section, I highlight those themes, giving particular attention to their relationship to the research questions and the three explanatory variables—external factors, the shortcomings of the intellectuals, and the ideas themselves.

### *Factionalism*

While considered by some to be an indicator of the democratic nature of the time, as well as an overall indicator of the democratic potentials of the PLO, factionalism ultimately demonstrated the dysfunctional qualities of the Resistance. With only armed resistance and the rather vague term of “Palestinian liberation” shared, there was little unity to empower and propel the movement forward. Ultimately factionalism provided the type of division that damaged the core of the movement; unity was missing at the very moment it was most desperately needed. To the present day, Fatah remains the dominant faction within the PLO, and largely sets the organisation’s trajectory.

### *Tradition and Secularism*

Regional traditions became a target for criticism as the leftist intellectuals worked towards complete change in their society, all the while criticising the aspects of it that they thought contributed to the Defeat. While the argument that traditions were to blame has its merits, I have also raised the concern that such opinions of tradition can demonstrate a gap between the intellectuals and the masses. Despite efforts to demonstrate why certain mindsets were harmful to the advancement of the society, no radical reform was made. The disjuncture between top-down prescriptions, and grassroots societal organisation and sentiments was clear. Despite striving towards such reform, efforts were not made in a way that truly connected with large portions of the society.

Additionally, the secular leanings of the intellectuals also struck a note of discord with the population, one that made impossible the type of popular struggle the Resistance was hoping to create. The religious inclinations of at least significant portions of the society likely

clashed with some of the basic messages embedded in the leftist doctrines of the factions, creating a gap between the intellectuals and the population that was far wider than the former had anticipated.

The theme of tradition points to reasons as to why the intellectuals were unable to maintain a strong role within the Resistance. Lamenting certain aspects of the society that they believed contributed to the losses faced—including a lack of accountability, military advancement, and unity—the intellectuals strove to change the very basis of society and popular attitudes. But pushback was inevitable, especially when the proposers of change were unable to provide the necessary steps to create such change. Furthermore, by focusing on the ‘backwardness’ of Arab society without honouring the positive aspects of the society and cultivating those to create change, it became difficult to achieve any traction. In other words, there was an ironic disjunction between the presumption of the intellectuals to lead and reform the masses and the latter’s alienation from this project of social reform.<sup>1</sup>

### *Questions of Democracy*

Many of those included in this study had expressed their desire for a democratic Palestine that would be inclusive of Jews, Christians, and Muslims. It is unclear, however, to what extent this idea was truly integrated in their ethos, in part because the period ended with the PLO expressing the primary goal of Palestinian liberation, without parameters beyond that. The marginalisation of the left meant the wider goals of the intellectuals were not included.

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the types of social gaps existing among Palestinians living after the 1967 war, see: Mark Heller, “Politics and Social Change in the West Bank Since 1967,” in *Palestinian Politics and Society*, ed. Joel S. Migdal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 185-211.



Furthermore, their continued lack of a clear plan demonstrated the inability of the Resistance to pursue, or even put together, a sound plan for creating a democratic state. Factionalism, as discussed, also exacerbated these problems because it showed an inability to come to the kind of compromises necessary to create a democratic society. Lastly, Arafat's wielding of control over the organisation also demonstrated the authoritarian nature of the PLO.

Thus, a power struggle seemed to take the place of any struggle for democratic values within the organisation. Discussing the issue of democracy within the PLO during this time, Quandt noted that Palestinians in the United States, such as Edward Said, were given more of a voice than anyone within the PLO itself.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, while intellectuals struggled to be heard within the organisation, Arafat kept a tight reign over them. Inequitable and restrictive measures called into question any notion, as put forth by some of the intellectuals, that the PLO was operating in a democratic way. While earlier in the period more efforts were made to voice and listen to the various opinions regarding resistance that had emerged, the growing strength of Fatah and its ultimate dominance over the organisation pushed those democratic goals further away.

Chapters One and Two discussed some of the differences between the younger and older generation of intellectuals. Many of the intellectuals included in this study felt that the traditions of their society were being unnecessarily held on to, and that these traditions were one of the reasons that the society was unable to make the necessary changes to produce revolution. More specifically, they felt that the disregard of the younger generation's voices,

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<sup>2</sup> William B. Quandt, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 25 September, 2017, phone interview.

demonstrated a type of tradition that was preventing the growth of democracy. In other words, to some of them, the culture of respect of elders was taken to an extreme. To Kanafani, for example, it is through abandoning the tradition of youth being entirely subordinate to elders, that their society would take bigger steps towards democracy. He writes: "Only when our administrative, political and cultural institutions are capable of spontaneously comprehending youthful strength, its excitement and influence, is there a democratic situation."<sup>3</sup> Without having such attention and ability to influence, Kanafani does not perceive democracy, which he defines as "a combination of equal opportunity, from parliament to the family, and continuous with the political, administrative and cultural institutions that form the blood circulation system of a democratic situation," to be a possibility.<sup>4</sup> This lack of respect for the voices of the younger generation is one that has almost certainly continued beyond Kanafani's time and to the present day, with the new generation now raising complaints about Kanafani's contemporaries.

While Kanafani's complaint has its merits, at its heart, his point is more a question of power than of inter-generational dispute. As we have seen through this study, certain factions and individuals of the PLO were more willing to work with the current political system, as it was defined by the larger, more powerful states. This practice carries down to the current day, as the PLO continues to work within the confines set by Israel and the United States. We can find proof of this, for example, in the strong backlash that the Oslo Accords received from Palestinians, even some of those who were in the PLO. Along with the feeling that it did not represent them was the sentiment that it catered to the needs and wants of Israel, far more

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<sup>3</sup> Ghassan Kanafani, "Afkār 'an al-taghīr wal-lughāt al-'Umiyā' " [Thoughts on Change and the "Blind Language"], *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 10 (1990): 143–44.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

than it did to those of Palestinians.<sup>5</sup> Ironically, as will be discussed further at the end of this chapter, the very generation that now runs the PLO and was there at the start of the organisation is now the one resisting calls for changes from the younger generation; calls that include creating a democratic Palestine and removing what they see as an organisation that does not represent their views.

### *Armed Resistance*

Armed resistance was a key element in the Resistance's strategy and identity. Keeping the *fedayeen* at the heart of the struggle was absolutely essential to their goals and their image as a guerrilla resistance movement. Beyond being in keeping with the times, armed struggle was more than a label given to their cause. While factions may have disagreed on political ideologies, armed resistance was a point upon which there was consensus. Still, as we have seen, factions appeared to compete with each other with regard to the number of armed operations carried out. Furthermore, even despite the support that armed struggle received, there was still criticism that it gave way to a culture that was harmful to the Resistance's goals. Rather than being an effective tool to gain advantage, some perceived that the armed groups began to use their strength for intimidation of other groups within the PLO.<sup>6</sup> Additionally, as

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<sup>5</sup> Rashid Khalidi writes, "Oslo was not designed to lead to Palestinian statehood or self-determination, in spite of what the P.L.O.'s leaders at the time appear to have believed. Rather, it was intended by Israel to streamline its occupation, with the Palestinian Authority acting as a subcontractor." Rashid Khalidi, "Beyond Abbas and Oslo," *The New Yorker*, 12 October 2015. Also see Shafiq al-Hout's description of the marginalisation he and others in the PLO felt at the time of Oslo. Shafiq al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO: The Inside Story of the Palestinian Struggle*, trans. Laila Uthmān and Hader Al-Hout (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 270–81.

<sup>6</sup> This was a point made by Walid Kazziha in our interview. He expressed frustration at what he saw as the overly aggressive nature of Fatah fighters off the "battlefield," for example, although it is worth noting that the example he gave was during the Lebanese civil war. Walid Kazziha, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 17 September, 2017, Cairo.

implied by Alloush, armed struggle became such a focus of the Resistance that other potentials of the movement were overlooked. These factors demonstrated the extent to which the Resistance was unable to use armed struggle effectively, once again diminishing the overall potential of the intellectuals to have and maintain their roles within the movement. As the period came to end, the powers that be within the PLO settled on a diplomatic path, along with more covert support of armed operations, including the 1974 Munich massacre. The Ten Point plan, which placed less emphasis on armed resistance, also marked the end of the PLO as a self-defined guerrilla resistance movement.

### *Pragmatism vs. Idealism*

The shift towards statism within the PLO represented the triumph of pragmatism over intellectualism and intellectual work more generally within the Resistance. Pragmatism became a dominant feature of the Resistance's strategy, becoming more important than an adherence to any particular ideology. Arafat, in particular, was seen as an individual whose pragmatism was a defining feature of the movement he came to dominate. "Pragmatic" was a term that my informants repeatedly used to describe him, as opposed to the more ideal-focused Habash, admired by some informants due this conviction of his. As we have seen from the perspective of Quandt, Arafat's pragmatism was in part a product of what could be considered political necessity. Conversely, those who held onto their ideals lacked the clarity in plans and ideas more generally to produce results, in part limiting their role as revolutionary actors. A medium that could have provided a balanced approach, between the pragmatism needed to survive politically and the idealism that could provide the vision, hopes, and dreams for the movement, was not present.

While the left saw the PLO as taking an overly pragmatic approach, others within the organisation saw it as overly idealistic, questioning whether it could, in fact, achieve its stated goals. Abu Iyad discusses the need, for example, to turn to a diplomatic approach around the time of the October war.<sup>7</sup> Al-Hout reminisces about the arguments in the 1970s between “a ‘just’ solution, which appears to be impossible as it entails the liberation of Palestinian soil, and the ‘acceptable solution’ which appears to be possible, establishing a state on part of that territory.”<sup>8</sup> This concern was also brought forward later by Ajami, as discussed in the Introduction and Chapter Five. In general, he expressed doubt, which this thesis sustains, that the left’s goals were actually achievable in the first place.

While pragmatism is often seen as an asset within diplomatic fields, as represented by Quandt’s comments in Chapter Five, its limitations and shortcomings become apparent in exactly the same sphere. If the Resistance was representing its population, gaining liberation for them and working towards a region freed of imperialism and colonialism, then forsaking portions of these goals for the purposes of progress is counter-productive.

Lastly, related to pragmatism but also demonstrating a limitation of this research is the lack of clarity existing within the factions’ messages to the public. Whether or not this was purposeful is at times difficult to decipher. Take, for example, the claimed ideological aspirations of the PFLP. As discussed in the previous chapter, Yezid Sayigh casts doubt over the notion that the faction was actually working towards a Marxist reality, providing evidence from

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<sup>7</sup> See, for example: Salah Khalaf, *Filasṭīnī bi-lā hawīyah* [Palestinian without Identity] (Hebron: Dār al-Khalīl lil-Nashr, 1996), 127.

<sup>8</sup> al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO*, 252.

a 1980s document from the PFLP. It is possible that the PFLP was more pragmatic than often portrayed. Nonetheless, what we find in Habash's own words, expressed retrospectively, is that the ideology was of great interest to him, and he was hoping to incorporate some its principles into his work.<sup>9</sup> These differences in reporting, one based on primary sources (Sayigh's), the other the primary source himself, provide little space for a solid conclusion as to the intended direction that the PFLP hoped to take. This contradiction demonstrates the extent of nuance existing within the intellectuals' and the factions' work, challenging the meaning behind their statements, raising question as to what extent the left also chose the pragmatic route. Lastly, this ambiguity also provides a possible answer as to why the left's messages lacked clarity and thus failed to reach the masses.

### *Rhetoric*

Equally important to assess, is the view that the left made ideological claims that were an inaccurate portrayal of its goals. This was not necessarily intentional. Rather, as hinted at by the intellectuals themselves, they were often unable to follow through on the goals they set and ideological aspirations that they expressed. This raises questions as to the extent to which their roles can be seen as important and integral to the movement. Kanafani's notion of "blind language," expressed in a 1968 article in *Shu'un Filastiniya*, highlights the view that the Resistance was not careful enough in placing meaning behind the terms they used to describe themselves and their political activity, and were without proper plans for change. He writes that, in the past ten years, "the meanings carried by such conventional terms as 'revolutionary,'

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<sup>9</sup> George Habash and Mahmoud Soueid, "Taking Stock: An Interview with George Habash," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 28, no. 1 (1998).

'Nasserist,' 'socialist,' 'justice,' 'democracy,' and 'freedom' appeared in innumerable writings that we would read every day and although it seemed...as if there was some consensus on their meaning; in fact no one agreed with anyone else on their significance."<sup>10</sup> Kanafani rightly states that the terms became somewhat meaningless for the Resistance, and so were not able to be used as a guide to craft their political doctrine. Additionally, as discussed in Chapter Five, Fanon has similar qualms with the nationalist movement and its calls, which he perceives to be relatively empty. Furthermore, this is what Ajami, years later in *The Arab Predicament*, complains of when critiquing the leftist intellectuals.

Ajami describes what he perceives to be a quixotic understanding of the intellectuals' potential as revolutionaries. Some, such as Haddad, criticised Ajami's take on how the problems of the post-1967 Arab world came to be, stating that Ajami does not discuss the role of the West in creating these problems. Haddad writes: "Nowhere does he care to discuss the impact of the tragedy of Palestine, the role of the Western powers since World War I in Arab divisions and tragedies, and the pressures of Israel's supporters on the Arab world before and after Camp David."<sup>11</sup> While it is important to give weight to these external factors that have negatively influenced the capacity of the intellectuals to enact change, Ajami's focus on the faults of the Arab world itself illuminates some of the reasons why the region was unable to make the progress that the intellectuals had intended in order to bring about radical change. Like al-Azm's *Self-Criticism*, in focusing inwards and criticising Arab society, Ajami gives attention to the types of problems that could be seen, at least in part, as being brought on by

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<sup>10</sup> Kanafani, "Afkār 'an al-taghīr wal-lughat al-'Umiya'," 145-46.

<sup>11</sup> George Haddad, "The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice since 1967 by Fouad Ajami," *The American Historical Review* 87, no. 3 (1982): 830.

the choices of those within the Resistance and in positions of power more generally.<sup>12</sup> In doing so, he emphasises that the revolutionary roles that they thought they could embody through their unique circumstances were too disconnected from the political realities that they faced and from the society in which they lived. He felt that their words became much like the empty rhetoric of the Arab nationalists. This view forces us to consider the limitations of the roles of intellectuals based on a possible lack of foresight on their part. Even if their words were not as empty as Ajami claims, they were able neither to agree upon a path nor to maintain the momentum of their movement and rally the masses.

### *Nationalism*

Fanon's opinion as to the obstacles that the colonised intellectuals would face, and ultimately fail to overcome, provides insights into the obstacles that also challenged Palestinian and Arab intellectuals. Along with his discussions of the problems these movements had with a lack of unity and shared values and a distance to the people, was his concern at the presence of nationalism within anti-colonial struggles and the potential harm it could cause. This is particularly relevant because of the closeness the PLO and many of its members had to Arab nationalism and Ba'thism, through the connections often maintained via their factions. This adherence to Arab nationalist thought, in conjunction with the failure of Marxist ideas to take hold, contributed to the failure of the anti-colonial intellectual in Palestine and the Arab world. While powerful, nationalism lacks a strong set of values backing it upon which people can unite and relate. At its most basic level, it relies upon connection to a place as a means to build unity.

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<sup>12</sup> Of course, al-Azm and Ajami had different opinions as to what the Arab world needed.



As Anderson famously described, it is an imagined community “because even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.”<sup>13</sup> The simplicity of this common denominator, however, can lack the depth necessary for realising goals of fundamental societal transformation and political revolution. Nonetheless, the broadness of nationalism had its advantages. For example, the general message of Palestinian nationalism and liberation, along with Fatah’s dedication to non-interference into other states’ affairs, likely worked to the faction’s advantage, while undermining the broader goals of the Resistance. The ultimate failure of nationalism shares a common denominator with the failure of the PLO’s leftist intellectuals: a lack of focus on the shared values needed to garner support and create unity.

There is also the view that the Resistance was seeking to alter and repurpose Arab nationalism. Salem explains: “the New Left hastened the demise of ideological politics within the middle class, however, because it reinterpreted Arab nationalist ideology—the ideology of the middle class—in radical revolutionary ways that ran directly against that class’s material and political interests.”<sup>14</sup> To Salem, the leftists helped to foil, for better or for worse, Arab nationalism, demonstrating where the ideology was weak. Furthermore, to him the advantage of the left was that they modified Arab nationalism to envision a unity that comprised a wider swath of the public and a stronger focus on anti-colonialism. Nonetheless, they appeared not to have the same amount of support as Arab nationalism, as evidenced by the evanescence of

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<sup>13</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1996), 6.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Salem, *Bitter Legacy: Ideology and Politics in the Arab World* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 201.

their movement and the Arab nationalist elements still present within some of the groups, a point which frustrated individuals such as Abu-Lughod. Lastly, Salem's point provides a helpful framing of how the left did not entirely abandon Arab nationalism in the 1967–1974 period. As discussed in Chapter Five, this was likely due to the lingering influence of the movement in the region in general. Adeed Dawisha refers to this lingering influence as “Arabism,” which he distinguishes from Arab nationalism. He emphasises that the unity so central to Arab nationalism was no longer present about the 1967 war. While the difference in terminology (between Arab nationalism and Arabism) has not been a focus of this thesis, Dawisha's point is in keeping with the basic premise in this research—that notions of unity, even attempts at it, were in large part replaced by factionalism and ideological competition.<sup>15</sup> Overall, people were left with a basic sense of an Arab identity that could potentially unite them. Nonetheless, what ultimately dominated the region's political landscape was *wataniya*, or state-focused nationalism, versus Arab nationalism, *qawmiya*.<sup>16</sup> This clash in ideas was also present within the PLO, with Fatah's efforts to focus simply on Palestinian liberation, versus the left's efforts to combine Arab nationalism with various leftist ideologies.

Salem makes the point that the PLO's left was useful in that it was “largely responsible for impeding the organisation's gradual drift towards accommodation.” In other words, they provided healthy competition. To him, because they were “the main opposition to the leadership of Yasir Arafat and Fateh,” they “preserved the PLO's commitment to confrontation

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<sup>15</sup> Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 252–53.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

with Israel well into the 1980s.”<sup>17</sup> Despite the failures we have studied, Salem’s point provides insights into what we can gain from the Resistance’s work. While the Rejection Front can be understood negatively because it further divided the Resistance and arguably contributed to the more extreme forms of violence taking place during that time, its existence can also be seen as a symbol of resistance itself, as a last hold out for the types of revolutionary changes in which so many had placed their hopes, despite the lack of depth present in many of the left’s ideologies.

The resentment felt by the left towards nationalism is an important point to take away from the time period and the leftists’ motives for their political moves. Ajami, as quoted in the Introduction, describes the leftists’ actions as a way to put the Arab nationalists and Ba’thists “on trial.” As was discussed in Chapter Two, the failure of Arab nationalism to bring victory in 1967 brought forth new criticisms of the movement, including from its supporters. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Three, many on the left started to perceive Nasser’s movement to be supportive of the petty bourgeoisie rather than society as a whole. In general, they, as well as Fanon, grew tired of what they saw as lies in the nationalist movements of the time. For Fanon as for Kanafani, nationalist movements were based on empty promises. Kanafani writes:

Whereas the representatives of a certain class are greatly pleased to encourage this blind language that, under the veil of nationalism, they consider to be a healthy expression, it is, in fact, nothing but a shield to protect those who, by their economic

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<sup>17</sup> Salem, *Bitter Legacy*, 201.

and political influence, have been suppressing the beginning of the movement for change.<sup>18</sup>

It is not entirely clear to whom Kanafani refers, but those in charge, those with a certain amount of privilege, were obviously suspect. Many of his peers, undeniably, felt that leaders such as Nasser were not truly committed to revolutionary change. This lack of commitment, of course, could also be understood through the threat to power that the left posed to heads of state in the region, a threat that was in many ways very real, as demonstrated by the Black September clashes which ended with the PLO move from Jordan to Lebanon. Furthermore, the support upon which they often relied came from the very regimes they opposed. The obstacles the left faced for attempting to create revolutionary change in the region were far greater than it appeared they were capable of handling. It is within this environment that the pragmatic stances of some seem understandable and perhaps even enticing.

Arafat's 1974 "Olive Branch and Gun Speech," while filled with expressions of determination for liberation and solidarity with oppressed people across the globe, departed from the visions that the left had had for revolutionary resistance. By some standards, the empty speech of nationalism, denounced by Fanon and Kanafani, could be considered to have been, ironically, present in Arafat's speech. This is because, despite the claims Arafat made for the anti-colonial, anti-imperialist struggle, the path that the PLO took led to diplomatic agreements like Oslo, which was widely criticised within the Palestinian community.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the stance on Palestinian liberation held by Arafat and his faction—much more

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<sup>18</sup> Kanafani, "Afkār 'an al-taghīr wal-lughat al-'Umiya'," 146.

<sup>19</sup> See for example: al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO*, 282–92.

limited in scope than what many of the intellectuals had called for—was also a central point of his plea. In certain respects, the speech defined the PLO as an organisation that worked for Palestinian liberation because Palestine had a right to pursue its national interests, rather than because Palestine was one part of a larger, anti-colonial or Arab nationalist struggle. This assessment matches the path that the PLO then followed, as well as the Ten-Point Plan upon which the organisation agreed. Rather than work towards liberating all of Palestine, the PLO settled on gaining any portion of the land. This, to many, was the only realistic option. Such a stance, despite the Rejection Front's efforts to oppose it, demonstrated the new direction of the organisation and the end of the era of possibilities for the leftist intellectuals. Some felt that the Resistance did move forward. To al-Hout, for example, Arafat's reception at the UN in 1974 was proof of that, but the backlash this and the Ten-Point Plan received within parts of the PLO, and particularly amongst the left, shows that while it may have been a success for Arafat and Fatah, it was the beginning of an approach that they saw as antithetical to their revolutionary dreams.

## **Roles of Intellectuals in Revolutionary Movements**

### *Practical Challenges*

The ineffectiveness of the intellectuals in carrying out their ideas brings us to a common criticism of them and their limitations as revolutionaries. Quandt, for example, expressed his view that because the intellectuals' work lies in their ideas, they have little to no practical experience in carrying out the plans that they make. In Arafat, by contrast, Quandt saw

someone who was at least able to do this.<sup>20</sup> However, in critiquing the purpose of intellectuals, Thomas Sowell stated that the work of intellectuals “begins and ends with ideas...Adam Smith never ran a business and Karl Marx never administered a Gulag.”<sup>21</sup> Both of the aforementioned views, leave out an important aspect discussed in the Introduction and demonstrated throughout. The intellectuals in this study clearly expressed and demonstrated their desire and obligation to take part in resistance. This view was shared by Chomsky, in his explanation of what he sees as the obligation of intellectuals, that is, to use their positions to engage political action and to think deeply and honestly about the issues in which they engage. This position that was taken seriously by those within this study, however flawed, from Habash to Hawatmeh and al-Azm. Because of the heavy involvement of the intellectuals in factions and work on the ground in general, connections were made to the Gramsci’s organic intellectual and Fanon’s colonised intellectual.

While the role of the intellectuals is not always understood as one of political leadership, in the case of the Palestinians and Arabs working during this time period, political leadership was understood to be at the centre of their work. For this reason, it is possible to point to their inability to maintain a strong political presence as another reason for their demise. Additionally, returning to the definition and role of intellectuals as set out in the Introduction, the intellectuals in this study took on the role of anti-colonial actors, working to maintain the resistance struggle and bring the masses together. Fanon’s work on the colonised intellectual and his understanding of the types of obstacles that will be insurmountable to their

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<sup>20</sup> Quandt, interview.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Sowell, *Intellectuals and Society* (New York: Basic Books, 2012), 4.

resistance struggle also informs our understanding of the type of work upon which they intellectuals embarked as well as their limitations.

### *Value of Intellectuals within Resistance Movements*

Regardless of the criticisms of the lack of depth of the Resistance movement and the ultimate failure of the intellectuals to bring about the change they had envisioned, David Plotke offers an important point regarding the very purpose of political movements and the ideological efforts, through speech and rhetoric, that are used to power them:

Movements are valuable in their exploratory, uncertain, and unpredictable elements—raising new questions, recognizing and defining injustices. To enact significant legal regulation of movements would have a chilling effect. The same applies to the discourses of movements. Their speech is intended to harm the position and prospects of political adversaries and to put conventional social and political practices in question. We should expect their language often to be hyperbolic and harsh.

Movements usually have an interest in employing civil modes of political argument, but whether they use good judgement is mainly their problem.<sup>22</sup>

With all the flaws that the PLO's leftist intellectuals had, and with the inconsistencies and holes in their ideologies, their presence provided impetus once again for change within the region and within the workings of the Palestinian liberation struggle. While goals were not met, and while portions of their political ideology, at least, did not gain the type of popularity that Arab nationalism, for example, had, their role as prodders and challengers was one that they lived up

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<sup>22</sup> David Plotke, "Two Questions about Social Movements," *The Good Society* 6, no. 1 (1996): 12.

to, though not one that they could easily retain from 1974. Such a role, however, is typically not easily maintained, and this is particularly the case when rhetoric is not supported by solid ideologies and then followed through with the necessary action.

### *Class*

While a purely popular struggle is more evident later on in the Palestinian resistance, such as during the First Intifada (1987–1991), individuals such as the leftist intellectuals working during the 1960s and 1970s resembled more of a vanguard. While they claimed to want the masses at the heart of the movement, their place as the movers of the masses and the *fedayeen* was not something that they wanted removed. At the same time, their unique socio-economic positions and connections to the population made them both part of the vanguard and part of the masses.

Gramsci's concept of the organic intellectuals, although somewhat marginal to this study, provides a basis for understanding the class of the intellectuals and their connection to the larger population, which was in general a closer one than that of the old-guard. Mona Younis provides a helpful division of three streams of the Palestinian (and Arab) middle class that we have studied:

[T]hose co-opted by the Arab governments through posts and entitlements [such as Shuqeiry], radicals who supported revolutionary movements for the overthrow of conservative Arab regimes as the necessary step toward the liberation of Palestine [the



leftists at the heart of this study]; and those who called for an independent route in the form of Palestinian nationalism [Fatah, at-large]<sup>23</sup>

Within these groups have emerged the discussions and arguments regarding how to build and direct the resistance struggle, with the first and second groups ultimately dominating. The refugees, however, seemed to remain on the periphery, despite claims that they were an essential part of the movement. Younis's emphasis on the significance of class and its importance in understanding resistance struggles as well as her notion that classes are not as homogenous as often portrayed helps us to clarify the position of the intellectuals. In other words, they exist on a spectrum of class, each class having multiple types within it, and each type having a unique set of resources. This helps to explain the unique position of the intellectuals, who, while not upper-class, were still somewhat well-off compared to those whom they hoped to unite and rally, revealing both an advantage in terms of their education as well as the distance between them and those to whom they spoke.

What did take place, however, was an eliding of the ideological differences between the left and the right and in place of the differences, labelling the two sides as Arab nationalists. Al-Azm writes:

The fifteen-year-old Arab revolution is supposed to find its support and center...in its revolutionary context and its social merits alone, not in a return of the concept of Arab nationalism in which the right-wing reactionary and left-wing scientific socialist

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<sup>23</sup> Mona Younis, *Liberation and Democratization: The South African and Palestinian National Movements* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 100.

standpoint are considered equals...the elimination of the distinction between the left and right in regards to Arab nationalism is entirely to the advantage of the right.<sup>24</sup>

In a commentary on al-Azm's work, Elias Shakir adds that the right eliminated key components of the liberation movement, particularly the "social and economic content."<sup>25</sup> These components, are of course, class components. We see that, in general, the term "nationalist" is not only multifaceted, but deceptive. Younis, for example, distinguishes between "radical nationalists" (presumably those working for a larger, Pan-Arab revolution) and "Palestinian nationalists" (Fatah, for example).<sup>26</sup> Nationalism thus remains firmly within the discussions of the factions of the PLO, no matter the extent to which they leaned left or right. This is significant because it shows a degree of stagnation in the possibility for significant and creative ideological change with the Resistance movement. There was a constant clash between nationalism, which seemed to work as a way to unite all classes of Arab society under the "Arab nation," and a leftist struggle that would move beyond this call that had, at least from the perspective of the leftist intellectuals, led to two defeats. Al-Azm notes that the inability to move away from nationalism and the existence of a nationalist left and right not only works to the advantage of the right, but "demonstrates that a true Arab socialist left capable of leading the Arab nation during its current trial does not exist...whether before or after the defeat."<sup>27</sup> This view, although expressed earlier on in the period, suggests that, despite the work of the

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<sup>24</sup> Sadik al-Azm, *Self-Criticism after the Defeat* (London: Saqi Books, 2011), 111.

<sup>25</sup> Original publication, Elias Shakir, "Class Positioning in the Phenomenon of *Self-Criticism after the Defeat*," *al-Tariq*, June 1969. Republished in, al-Azm, *Self-Criticism after the Defeat*, 148.

<sup>26</sup> Younis, *Liberation and Democratization*, 102.

<sup>27</sup> Al-Azm, *Self-Criticism after the Defeat*, 111.

intellectuals to fashion a radical movement, the necessary elements of leftist ideas were awash with nationalism.

The more general calls for Arab nationalism are what ultimately prevailed within the PLO. While I argue that the problem was also that the left's arguments and calls for class struggle were not strong enough, Fatah's simpler, loose slogan of Palestinian nationalism was victorious. As suggested in Shakir's article, Fatah was still able to use some of the messages of a leftist struggle whilst focusing largely on Palestinian nationalism. This is evident, for example, in Arafat's *Olive Branch and Gun Speech*. While he speaks of his goal of national liberation, he also notes his people's hope for "a world free of colonialism, imperialism, neo-colonialism and racism in all of its forms, including Zionism."<sup>28</sup> This lack of clarity in plans, or purposeful ambiguity as I have called it in Chapter Three, helped Fatah yet hurt plans for a wider revolutionary movement, uniting populations through the idea of class, for example. As Greenstein concluded, nationalism was much more powerful than "class discourse."<sup>29</sup> While not necessarily resistant to Arafat's PLO speech, some of the left felt that the diplomatic route, the olive branch, ultimately took over and that without armed struggle, there would be no way for a viable, fair solution. Habash expresses this well: "We [PFLP] thought that the timing

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<sup>28</sup> An Arabic transcript can be found on the Palestinian Authority's official news agency website: Yasser Arafat, "Olive Branch and Gun" (speech, New York, 13 November 1974), Palestine News and Info Agency (WAFA), [http://info.wafa.ps/ar\\_page.aspx?id=4932](http://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=4932).

<sup>29</sup> Ran Greenstein, *Zionism and its Discontents: A Century of Radical Discontent in Israel/Palestine* (London: Pluto Press, 2014), 195.

decided by Arafat was not the best, because our preparations for the diplomatic path were still insufficient.”<sup>30</sup>

While the leadership of traditional families discussed in Chapter One was no longer as present amongst Palestinians from 1967 to 1974, some argue that the PLO, Fatah in particular, simply replaced these families in large part because Palestinians were stateless and relied upon external support. This dilemma is one that was addressed in Chapter Four as an obstacle to the left’s goal of revolutionary change, not just for Palestinians but for all of Arab society. Fatah is often blamed for choosing to remain within this system. In a study of Palestinian politics and society shortly after the 1967 war, Donna Robinson Divine notes, “what is striking about the results of this research is the number of Palestinians among these activists [of Fatah] who were members of families that had been associated with the Husaynis [al-Husseinis] in Palestine before 1948.”<sup>31</sup> Divine suggests, that patronage simply shifted to Fatah, ultimately leaving the same type of political structure in place.

Divine’s research reflects the manner in which Kazziha described Fatah’s leadership, referring to it as “fiefdoms, reflecting all the maladies of Arab society, and Palestinian society.”<sup>32</sup> To him, there was a type of classism present in the leadership arrangement of Fatah that showed that Palestinian and Arab society still had not progressed in the way the left had envisioned. As we saw in Chapter Four, Quandt, however, understands this differently, seeing the ranks in Fatah

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<sup>30</sup> George Habash [Georges Habache] and Georges Malbrunot, *Les Révolutionnaires ne meurent jamais* [Revolutionaries never die] (Paris: Fayard, 2008), 131.

<sup>31</sup> Donna Robinson Divine, “The Dialectics of Palestinian Politics,” in *Palestinian Politics and Society*, ed. Joel S. Migdal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 228.

<sup>32</sup> Kazziha, interview.

as a means for Arafat to consult and give voice to others within the organisation. Like Abu-Lughod, Kazziha felt that it was the left who was truly working against the problems within Arab and Palestinian society, successfully or unsuccessfully, rather than simply seeking ownership and dominance over the Palestinians, as Kazziha implied Fatah was doing. Kazziha added: “It’s not enough to say we are Palestinians, we are a nation, we have to have our own state, but you have to look at the very practical issues that you are fighting, not only among your own people.”<sup>33</sup> The debates regarding vanguardism and popular struggle also raised questions of elitism. Vanguardism, after all, may not allow for a truly popular struggle that would unite people based on class. These points are ones that have been discussed throughout the thesis—the need for a realistic, critical understanding of the mistakes and potentials of the Resistance, the restraints placed on the Resistance due to the political realities of the time and other external factors, and the struggle to create a genuinely popularly-led struggle. They also coincide with two of the three explanatory variables, the role of external factors and the intellectuals’ shortcomings in stifling their abilities to progress in their role as revolutionary intellectuals.

### *Consciousness and Commitment*

In this study we have witnessed the challenges the intellectuals posed to one another with regards to their dedication to the resistance struggle. Criticisms of a lack in commitment to the actual needs of the struggle were commonplace, as were discussions of what those needs actually were. The left worked to think deeply about the potentials of the Resistance and to

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

bring to the fore new methods for tackling problems faced in the region. Considering the authoritarian direction in which the PLO went, they had much to combat, yet overcoming this obstacle proved too great. Kanafani speaks of how he imagines this to take place.

“Responsibility rests,” Kanafani writes, “on the shoulders of the intellectuals to be a conscious element of constructive commitment and not an element that sits back in its absolute rejectionism.”<sup>34</sup> While they worked to have this balance, and while some were unwilling to compromise, the political pressures of the time placed large obstacles before them. He hints at some frustration with the intellectuals’ inability to move beyond what dissatisfied them, and with specific reference to the role of intellectuals within the Palestinian and larger Arab struggle, emphasises the need for more than simply a rejection of their peers’ politics. At the end of the period, factionalism was rampant. Many on the left formed the Rejection Front in protest to the PLO’s changing politics. Despite the left’s efforts, they were unsuccessful in producing the types of results intended in forming this front. This failure, along with criticisms that the period did not produce sufficient, coherent intellectual output, as suggested by Alloush and al-Azm, supports Kanafani’s regret at infighting and obstinacy.

### *Ideological Dilemmas*

A further difficulty our intellectuals faced is that some of the ideas they offered seemed rootless. As much as they were inspired by the popular resistance struggles taking place globally, they could not simply superimpose the ideas and strategies they learned onto their movement. Al-Azm noted this, stating: “it goes without saying that experiences of armed

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<sup>34</sup> Kanafani, “Afkār ‘an al-taghīr wal-lughat al-‘Umiya’,” 156.

popular struggle do not transfer automatically from one country to another or from region to region, but each popular movement leading this sort of struggle must develop the methods that suit it, in light of the experience of others.”<sup>35</sup> This became a point for argument, as Kishk, for example, found the intellectuals to adopt Western ideologies that had no place in the region. In some respects, the gap between the intellectuals’ ideas and their context became evident as their factions struggled to maintain a hold within the PLO.

Kazziha finds disappointment in the lack of popular resonance, but is also frustrated by the masses’ lack of understanding of some of the principles that the left had been trying to propagate.<sup>36</sup> While he may be correct that they did not understand them, it is possible that these principles simply did not speak to them and reach their needs. This disconnect that Kazziha felt may also be another reason why ideas such as Arab nationalism were hard to abandon.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, it also demonstrates the basic way in which the intellectuals were unable to effectively connect with the population, despite Kazziha’s comments that it was largely Fatah that did not work to connect with the population at-large. While the intellectuals were for the most part not from the upper echelon of society like the generation before them, they still seemed to over-estimate their understanding of what was best for the masses. The call for a proletarian revolution simply did not take hold.

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<sup>35</sup> Al-Azm, *Self-Criticism after the Defeat*, 88.

<sup>36</sup> Kazziha, interview.

<sup>37</sup> While some credit the popularity of Arab nationalism to its most charismatic proponent and leader, Abdul Nasser, for the stateless Palestinians, Arab unity was seen early-on as a necessity for survival. This was discussed in Chapters One and Two. As much as the intellectuals, left and right, expressed reverence for Nasser, he was not the only reason they were attracted to the ideology.

## Circular Motion of Resistance

Despite efforts to remake the Resistance and wake the masses, the period ended without the Resistance's grand dreams having been achieved. The periodic alarms rung by people like Antonius, Zurayk, and al-Azm, in 1938, 1948, and 1968, respectively, seemed to remain the same. That is, rather than each period evolving and developing the liberation movement, complaints as to what was missing remained present throughout each period in Palestinian and Arab resistance history. Despite 1967–1974 featuring individuals with a unique outlook on resistance, largely being inspired by anti-colonial resistance groups globally at the time, the intellectuals were unable to achieve the goals that they had identified as being part of a greater Arab struggle. The types of complaints that al-Azm laid bare in *Self-Criticism after the Defeat*, could be seen to be present still in 1974—a sense of unity over a common goal was far away, nationalist tendencies still seemed embedded in many of the leftist factions (as was implied during the split of the DFLP from the PFLP), no technological advances had been made, and the splits in the Resistance along with the dominance of Fatah—with its limited approach to Palestinian liberation—demonstrated a more simplistic, political approach that lacked the depth that thinkers like Sadik al-Azm had emphasised were needed. Alloush seemed to imply something similar, stating, “what the factions published before 1987 were not thought-provoking publications.”<sup>38</sup> While Abu-Lughod expressed, in 1973, that the left were the ones trying to bring about fundamental change, historical evidence brings into question whether or

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<sup>38</sup> Naji Alloush, *Fikr ḥarakat al-muqāwamat al-Filasṭīniyah (1948-1987): naẓrah 'aāmah* [Thoughts on the Palestinian National Movement 1948–1987: General Views] (Bīr Zayt Lajnat Turāth Bīr Zayt, 1993), 142.



not they were serious about the claims that they made, at least in terms of advancing a Marxist approach towards liberation.

Darraj describes the succession of views and approaches towards the struggle from 1967 onwards: “‘the imperialist-Arab struggle,’ ‘the Arab-Zionist struggle,’ ‘the Arab-Israeli struggle,’ ‘the Palestine-Israel struggle,’ arriving finally at the Oslo Agreement that reduced ‘historical Palestine’ to a collection of contiguous small prisons.”<sup>39</sup> With each successive “struggle,” the movement becomes narrower. This is what many of the intellectuals feared. Along with the isolation of Palestine was the narrowing of what resistance could and should accomplish. Rather than holistic revolution that would change the people and enrich the society with cultural and technological advances, as well as a new order, there would be isolated attempts at some semblance of liberation for some people. While these are significant points to the time period, they also reflect a continuity in the frustrations expressed: they were the same points discussed in 1948, and have continued to be discussed to the present day. Rather than demonstrating the importance of such ideas to successful liberation, the continuing significance of the intellectuals reveals the gap between persistent visions of a new order and their achievement.

In discussing Arab resistance in the 1980s, Barbara Harlow raises the relevance of this earlier time period. To her, the 1980s could be understood as also being a type of anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggle: “twenty years later, in the period of post- (or neo-) colonialism, those same theoretical premises resonate once again, albeit with a new historical

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<sup>39</sup> Faisal Darraj, “The Persistence of the Defeat/The Persistence of the Critical Book,” in *Self Criticism after the Defeat* (London: Saqi Books, 2011), 23.

configuration, that of economic imperialism."<sup>40</sup> In light of this, 1967–1974 is remembered by its celebrants as important for the forceful way in which thinkers of the time pushed for their struggle to be understood as one that stood against oppressing forces coming from within and outside the region. Despite the failures they faced, this point could be seen as one of somewhat lasting success, and perhaps one that was more successful than in proceeding periods. To Harlow, individuals like Kanafani were particularly important in working to push the Resistance in the necessary direction, towards a thoughtful resistance struggle. While the First Intifada is typically seen as one of the most successful points in Palestinian resistance, Harlow quotes Darraj's view of its problematic aspects. Darraj takes issue with the lack of written theoretical work that could support the moves of those resisting at that time. It is worth including Harlow's quotation from Darraj's 1989 article in *al-Hadaf*:

The intifada does not deliver a theoretical speech, but it is making out of its multiple practices the highest form of theoretical discourse...but if its practice of creative theory without articulating it, its practice of revolutionary theory, leaves to 'others' the task of translating practice into the realm of written theory, when will the practice write its theory?<sup>41</sup>

Darraj, and presumably Harlow, is contrasting the Intifada period with the period of the 1960s, a time when Palestinian intellectuals put theory to paper and tried to set up success for the movement's present and future. He implies, in other words, that resistance struggles need

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<sup>40</sup> Barbara Harlow, "Introduction to Kanafani's 'Thoughts on Change and the "Blind Language"', " *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, no. 10 (1990): 135.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

intellectuals who are prepared to pen the theoretical workings of their movements. While such documentation could help to produce clear goals, one of the greatest faults of 1967–1974 is that they did not have clear objectives and, as a result, had little unity. This was in spite of all of their efforts to express their ideological views. If we juxtapose Harlow’s view of the importance of the work in the 1960s and 1970s with Ajami’s view as expressed in Chapter Five, that 1967–1974 produced dreamers who “thought the world could be remade with a pamphlet,” and we consider the strategic and political successes of the First Intifada versus the failures of 1967–1974, we can understand the extent to which opinions on the success of this period vary, as well as the extent to which even views of what makes the Resistance successful vary. Lastly, this juxtaposition also calls into question the role and even the necessity of the revolutionary intellectual, with some seeing them as essential to a rightly-guided struggle and others perceiving them to be too impractical to carry the weight of such intricate and nuanced political ideas and to bring them to fruition within their society.

Harlow also highlights Darraj’s view of one of the fundamental problems with the approach of the political parties in the Arab world: “The essential character of the prevailing Arab culture is not manifested in political allegiance, but in a series of ideological stereotypes which fight the defeat from defeated positions.”<sup>42</sup> From this, we understand the unfortunate position in which the Resistance found itself in the 1980s, but also in the 1960s and 1970s. Rather than delve deeper into the political ideals for which they stood, factions and individuals appeared to remain attached to labels rather than the meaning of the ideas they proposed.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 135.

Instead of spelling out how the working classes were to unite and defeat Zionism, for example, such an idea remained left to the imagination, adding to the intellectuals' own criticisms that they were not clear enough in explaining their ideas to the masses. According to Darraj, this continued to be a problem later on as well.

Just as I argue that the Resistance's path has been circular, so does Faris believe that this period in Resistance history will return to centre stage, with its importance recognised once more. Complementing Faris's view, Harlow points out that Kanafani's political and ideological importance is demonstrated through his death. As discussed in Chapter Five, despite the continued marginalisation that the intellectuals faced, to the Israelis their work was likely still important, as evidenced by targeted assassinations. Harlow makes her point through a question: "The urgency with which Ghassan Kanafani's work continues to speak to the social and political issues of the Arab world certainly, but of the global context as well, raises still another question: If Ghassan Kanafani were alive today, are there not still those who would feel it necessary to assassinate him?"<sup>43</sup>

Kanafani believed that success was yet to come:

It would nonetheless be unwise for us to imagine that the Arab is finding his full compensation in this critical awakening. Rather, this period of waiting, lived so tensely now, is not unlike that of 1949, or that experienced by the Russian people between 1904 when they were defeated by Japan and 1905 with its first revolution, to be followed ten years later by another revolution that changed the face of the twentieth

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 136.

century. What is happening now is only the labour pains of something great that will be born from the rubble of the defeat like a volcano born from under the cold ashes of a forsaken mountain.<sup>44</sup>

The two historical events discussed are the same ones criticised by the likes of Zurayk and al-Azm, yet rather than use them as points of hope, they see them primarily as points of despair. The Arab world and the Palestinians still wait for success to come out of 1967. What can be taken from the period, in spite of all the failures, is the spirit of self-criticism and determination for change. Kanafani aptly summarises one of the strengths of the period: "The defeat came and this people discovered an extraordinary ability not only to reject it, but to re-examine its own account with itself."<sup>45</sup>

Returning to the central research question of this thesis, I have found that the three areas of concern identified in the Introduction act as a guide in identifying the problematic factors that afflicted the intellectuals' ability to make their desired progress and revolutionary changes in general. In his assessment of some of the reasons for the failures of the time period, Greenstein explains: "Under intense conflict, a range of issues beyond financial and military resources shape the prospects of different parties: internal unity, effective mobilization of people, strategic coherence, tactical flexibility, and ability to manipulate self-images and external impressions."<sup>46</sup> He focuses on some of the same points that I have raised in the thesis in general. These include the intellectuals' shortcomings, particularly their inability to mobilise

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<sup>44</sup> Ghassan Kanafani, "Afkār 'an al-taghīr wal-lughat al-'Umiya'," 157.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>46</sup> Greenstein, *Zionism and its Discontents*, 195.

the masses effectively, as well as their lack of building a clear, strategy based on the ideologies they wanted to follow. “Tactical flexibility” could refer to the unwillingness of many of the intellectuals to be pragmatic towards the end of the period, when the PLO was not as determined to liberate all of Palestine. Lastly Greenstein’s criticism that the Resistance—not just the intellectuals—could not effectively “manipulate self-images and external impressions” raises questions about their efforts to promote their struggle as a larger anti-colonial resistance struggle. At the same time, while Greenstein identifies this as a reason for failure, in terms of the intellectuals’ efforts, it could also demonstrate a genuine commitment to their cause. Malbrunot noted this quality of Habash’s character, whom he described as someone who was unrelenting in his views and genuine in his word.<sup>47</sup>

The focus on external factors, the intellectuals’ shortcomings, and the possible disconnects between the ideas they supported and the populations for whom they presumed to speak, sheds light on why and how the intellectuals’ roles changed throughout this period. Despite all of their flaws and failures, this period is still considered momentous for the Palestinian Resistance and Arab history. It is still marked out as a “period” in its own right, one that deserves attention even if there are contested and partisan interpretations of it. Emphasising the intellectuals’ roles as anti-colonial fighters also places the period within the broader historical category of anti-colonial struggle. Despite the fragmentation within the PLO and the disagreements between individuals, we are still able to grasp this desire they shared for genuine and revolutionary change.

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<sup>47</sup> Georges Malbrunot, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 25 August, 2016, Paris.

Exactly what kind of society the intellectuals hoped to create remains nebulous, however. In his interview with Malbrunot, Habash says:

I am for the return of every Palestinian to his hometown, including those who were born in the 1948 territories...I am not ready to accept Israeli manoeuvres to halt the return of the refugees...When international parameters are favourable to us, then we will be able to insist on having the right of return...I am for a democratic state in peaceful coexistence with Jews and Palestinians. That's my philosophy. And, until my last breath, I will continue to struggle to realise this ideal.<sup>48</sup>

This vision contrasts with that espoused during Ottoman times, as well as later, when visions for a Palestinian entity changed within the PLO, and outside of it, with the rise in power of Islamic groups. The initial stamina gained by the Resistance in the 1960s was the result of ideas from the past and present, and contextual possibilities.

Afterwards, the new path forged was marred with same dysfunction of 1967–1974. As al-Hout points out, “the PLO embarked on its peace engagement with the enemy in exactly the same way that it had engaged in its military engagement, that is with no fixed strategy or any political agenda comprising a list of priorities, mechanisms, or tactics.”<sup>49</sup> At a 2017 conference on Palestine, a former Palestinian Authority diplomat, Afif Safieh, spoke of his political and ideological evolution within the PLO:

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<sup>48</sup> Habash [Habache] and Malbrunot, *Les Révolutionnaires ne meurent jamais*, 300.

<sup>49</sup> al-Hout, *My Life in the PLO*, 252.

I belong to the generation of Palestinian students in the late '60s, early '70s that took part in the resurrecting [*sic*] national movement...I am noticing now within the new generation of Palestinian students...that many of them are devoting much of their research and writing in speaking, for example, about the unrepresentative nature today of the PLO, while we *then* were struggling to create the PLO and to strengthen it and to give it as much representativity [*sic*] as possible...I always tell my friends...don't demolish what exists because it will be to the detriment of the Palestinian...I, for one, forty years ago made the choice of working within rather than working on the margins of [it].<sup>50</sup>

Although he references contemporary times, he speaks of some of the critical points of discussion that took place within the movement during the 1960s and 1970s. The question of representation, for example, had implications for the PLO, at factional and popular levels, as we have seen. A power struggle took place amongst the factions within the PLO, which arguably reached an impasse in the early 1970s with the creation of the Rejection Front. In addition, frequent ideological disagreements led to fragmentation and the creation of other factions that would accommodate differences in ideology. On a popular level, the factions struggled to appropriately and fully represent the masses whom they claimed were at the heart of the movement.

Safieh also hints at the tensions that exist and have existed between the generations of Palestinians. The first two chapters of this work explain the historical significance of those who

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<sup>50</sup> Afif Safieh, in *Palestine and the West, Edward Said Memorial Symposium* (academic symposium, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, 24–26 November 2017).



have involved themselves in the Palestinian struggle since the late-Ottoman period, in so doing, emphasising the importance of intellectual heritage. Along with inspiration were also differences in opinion and strategy between those who were working to lead the movement and those who already had such a role. Just as many who came on the scene in the 1960s were frustrated with the traditional leadership—families such as the Nashashibis—who had worked as the representatives of Palestine to governing authorities—it appears that, at present, those who have leadership roles are frustrated with the past PLO leadership who had come to the fore in the 1960s and 1970s. That is not to say that all who are included in this study now represent something other than what they used to stand for. Rather, what is demonstrated is the cyclical motion of the Palestinian struggle—one that was the cause of much debate and anger in 1967.

### **Possible Future Research**

We might say that the intellectuals were products of their time—they followed Marxism because it was the 1960s, they used guerrilla warfare because the Algerians and Cubans did, etc. While to an extent, this is correct; they did glean their understandings of and tactics for their own movement from others. Still, what remains to be understood is what choices and actions they made that stood the test of time. While this study focuses strictly on 1967–1974, the next step in this research would be to link what these intellectuals did, during that time period, to the present day. Faris is convinced the ideas that were discussed, written about, and acted upon during this period were not just useful for that time in history but are bound to

resurge since they continue to have relevance to issues of the day.<sup>51</sup> It would be instructive, as has been hinted at in the preceding section, to understand in specific ways why and how these ideas could be usefully applied today.

Kanafani describes the gap between the older and younger (his) generation and laments the strong emphasis on the traditional expectation that the younger generation should look up to and respect the older generation. "Older men," he explains "both in terms of age and by custom, demand always of the younger the right of respect and submission."<sup>52</sup> This is a point of tradition, for example, that Kanafani singled out as an obstacle to achieving the leftist intellectuals' goals. Similarly, many young Palestinians now—who support the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement (BDS) and oppose the Palestinian Authority—are struggling to have their views respected and heard by the older generation, the generation of Kanafani. Those of them who are still involved in the PLO seem hesitant to let go of an organisation that they built, while many of the younger generation are more than ready for change. Still, the zeal of a Kanafani remains undimmed. After all, many leftists of his generation rejected the pragmatic choices of Arafat and his followers and, while they have little power, the PFLP and PFLP-GC still exist. Moreover, some in the older intellectual generation, such as al-Azm, have been deeply angered by the support others have given to the Syrian regime during the ongoing civil war. Al-Azm summed up the critique in his characteristically lucid and

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<sup>51</sup> Hani Faris, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 19 August 2016, phone interview.

<sup>52</sup> Kanafani, "Afkār 'an al-taghīr wal-lughat al-'Umiya'," 141.

emphatic way: “They are parodies of themselves.”<sup>53</sup> How this will change, and who will take on the task of changing it, is yet to be seen.

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<sup>53</sup> Al-Azm, interview by Katlyn Quenzer, 5 January, 2016, Berlin.

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